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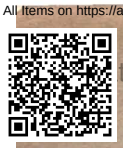

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JOURNAL

OF THE

BOMBAY BRANCH

OF THE

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

(NEW SERIES)

EDITED BY

DR. V. S. SUKTHANKAR, M.A., PH.D. (Berlin)

A. A. A. FYZEE, M.A. (Cantab.), Bar-at-Law

PROF. N. K. BHAGWAT, M.A.

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THE SECT OF IMAM SHAH IN GUJRAT.

By W. Ivanow.

1. *Preliminary Remarks.*

There are many sects in India in which the beliefs of Islam are strangely mixed up with the beliefs and practices of Hinduism. Such, for instance, are the widely spread branches of the Panjpiriya on the Gangetic plains, or different local sects worshipping the tombs of various Muhammadan saints in the Punjab, Sindh, and practically everywhere in Northern India. In some places large numbers of Muslims, who are generally regarded as orthodox, follow Hinduistic beliefs and practices. Millions of nominally orthodox Muhammadans of rural Bengal worship Kali, Sitala, etc., as much, if not more than Allah and His Prophet.

Such is the state of affairs to-day; most probably centuries ago, when Islam was gradually spreading in this country, such transition forms between Muhammadanism and Hinduism were more numerous, and were followed by a much greater proportion of the whole Muhammadan population of India.

The ground for such symbiosis of these two widely different religious standpoints was double. Islam, introduced and encouraged by Muhammadan rulers, never developed an adequate propaganda organisation, which probably always remained dependent on sporadic and spontaneous efforts of different individuals or private bodies. Under these circumstances there was rarely sufficient possibility to get rid entirely of all that was contrary to the spirit of Islam in the "mentality" of the new converts. In some other cases, most probably, a certain amount of those beliefs which were unessential by themselves, were consciously left by missionaries whose intention was to make conversion for Hindus as little difficult as possible.

On the other hand, Hinduism itself shows a great deal of a quite spontaneous inclination towards some aspects of Muhammadan worship which it easily incorporates into its rather amorphous structure. Such especially is the worship of tombs of

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different saints, participation in the processions of Muḥarram, etc. The demand for belief in miracles was apparently always so great in Hinduism that it did not hesitate to worship the graves of those saints who, when alive, were taking special pride of being irreconcilable enemies of the Hindu religion.

Such paradoxical phenomena in popular religious life should appear extremely interesting to every student of Indian sociology and cultural evolution; unfortunately, just as many other features of the life of masses, they very rarely find an expression in literature, or leave any tangible records, and thus are extremely difficult to observe.

One of the strangest, and the most interesting sects of this kind apparently is the sect of the Imam-Shahis, or Satpanthis, as they call themselves. They are found at present in Gujrat, Kathiawar, Kachh, Berar, and Khandesh. Almost all of them are Hindus of different castes, chiefly agriculturists and traders. Their number is differently estimated at about 200,000, but this number is rapidly decreasing, especially of late, when many Hindu bodies are making efforts to reconvert the Satpanthis to Hinduism.

The sect came into existence in Gujrat about the first quarter of the XVIth century, when Muḥammad, son of Imâm Shâh, has severed his connection with the parent sect of the Nizari Ismailis. But as originally the Satpanthis of Gujrat were converted by Imam Shah, the sect is called after him, though, as far as it is possible to see from the few records which are available, he himself remained faithful to the original religion.

Satpanth, i.e. "True Path", was the name under which the Nizari, or Persian Ismailism was preached in India by the Persian Ismaili missionaries in the beginning of the XIVth century. The new religion was rapidly spreading in what at that time was the cultural centre of the Muslim power in India, *i.e.* Upper Sindh and the Panjab. The establishment of a new Muhammadan dynasty in Gujrat in the beginning of the XVth century opened a new field for missionary activity, and Imam Shah, who started the campaign, met with remarkable success. The split, caused by his son, separated his community from the original Satpanth,

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which is now better known as the Khoja Nizari Ismaili community. The latter, preserving contact with their Imams in Persia, and being more open to influences of the original Persian Ismailism, continually pursued the policy of getting rid of those Hinduistic elements which earlier missionaries permitted, and of replacing these with purely Islamic ideas. Contrary to this, the seceding sect was left entirely at the mercy of the Hinduistic ideas, and, in the course of time, has gradually lost all touch with the Islamic world. Thus in the course of time a great gulf has formed between these two communities, and though at present both of them revere the memory of the ancient missionaries, and regard their books as their sacred literature, they widely differ in many essential dogmas and practices.

The student who would like to take up this most interesting subject, will find himself quite helpless. A great difficulty is added by the confusion in the names of the sect. As usual in India, caste and sectarian names do not often coincide. For instance, the well-known term Khoja, by which the world at large would not hesitate to understand a Nizari Ismaili, is merely a *caste* name. The majority of Khojas really are Nizari Ismailis. But there are also Sunni Khojas, and Ithna-'ashari Khojas, etc. Similarly, there are Momnâs (from *mu'min*) who are for the most part Imam-Shahis. But some of them may be Sunnites, etc. Thus when in historical records there is a mention of Matias, or Kanbis, etc., there is no guarantee whatever that this refers to the followers of Imam Shah exclusively.

Satpanth possesses a remarkably large religious literature, taking into consideration the fact that probably about 99 per cent. of its followers always were illiterate peasants. This literature consists of religious books in old Sindhi, Gujrati, and sometimes Panjabi and Hindi.

These books contain sacred hymns (*gnans*),[1] moral advices, miracle stories and legends, ecstatic poems, etc. But, in complete agreement with the Hindu spirit, they never take any interest in historical matters. Oral tradition, which can never be regarded

[1] The meaning of this term is explained further on, see p. 29.

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as a reliable source, is here plainly and obviously unreliable, partly because it always prefers legend to historical facts, and partly because it is invariably prejudiced by some sectarian feelings, supporting the claims of one or other of the numerous branches of the sect, often bitterly hostile to every other. On the other hand, it would be obviously useless to search for any information about the sect in general historical literature, because it almost always existed as a secret community. Even now a great proportion of it, the Guptis, as they are called, are in appearance ordinary Hindus, quite undistinguishable from their fellow-castemen.

The information preserved about them in the official publications of the Government of India, such as the Gazetteers, etc., is often very valuable. But, as is well-known, it is not always based on sufficiently reliable sources with regard to the historical side. During the last few decades a new literature, in Gujrati, has sprung up, attempting to some extent to clear up the history of the Khojas and the Imam-Shahis. As a rule it is of very little help, partly because it is chiefly based on legends and oral tradition, and partly because it is almost invariably conceived by the spirit of propaganda, controversy, or factional quarrels between the different branches of the sect.[1]

1) Khoja vrutant by Nanjiani
2) Khoja Komno Itihas
3) Nur Wahdaniyaat
4) Ismaili Darpan
5) Khoja Komni Tawarikh
6) Momin Komno Itihas
7) Tawarikhi Pir
8) Ismaili
9) Isamili Virla
10) Ismaili Nar Ratno
11) Noorun Mubin

Such, for instance, is the *Khoja Vratant* (Ahmedabad, 1892), by Sachedina Nanjiani, a Khoja renegade, who attacks his former co-religionists. *Khoja Komno Itihas* (1908), a history of the Khojas, by Jaffer Rahimtoola Kadru; *Nûri waḥdâniyyat*, and *Ismaili Darpan*, on the religion of the Khojas, by Hasham Bogu Master; *Khoja Komni Tawarikh* (Amreli, 1912), a controversy, by Edulji Dhonji Kava; *Momin Komno Itihas* (Bombay, 1936), a history of Imams, by Miyanji Noormahomed Roohkash; *Pirana Satpanth ni Pol* (1926), a controversy, by Patel Narayanji Ramgibhai Contractor; *Tawârîkhi Pîr*, I (1914) and II (1935), by Sayyid Ṣadru'd-dîn Dargâhwâllâ of Nawsari; the works by the learned editor of the

1 My own knowledge of Gujrati is insignificant, and for all information derived from the Gujrati and Sindhi sources, as well as many important facts, I must acknowledge my great indebtedness to my friends, Haji Mahomed Fazal, and to Mr. Husein Sherif, the assistant editor of the "Ismaili" (Bombay), who generously offered me their time and labour.

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"Ismaili" (a Bombay weekly) Alimahomed Janmahomed Chunara *Ismaili Nar Ratno* (Bombay, 1931); *Ismaili Virla* (Bombay, 1932) and *Noorun Mubin* (Bombay, 1936),—all three representing the orthodox point of Khoja Ismailism, etc.

The following is the list of the sacred religious works accepted both by the Khojas and the Imam-Shahis. About their authors see further on.

I. Pîr Shamsu'd-dîn: 1. *Sloko Moṭo* (*gnans*); 2. *Garbî* (also *gnans*); 3. *Mansamjâṇî* (Sufic, on self-knowledge); 4. *Bharam Prakâsh* (on knowledge of God); 5. *Kathâ Râjâ Govarchand* (instructive story); 6. *Vâyak moṭo* (moral doctrine); 7. *Hans Hanslî* (legend).

II. Pîr Ṣadru'd-dîn: 1. *Sloko Nâno* (*gnans*); 2. *Buj Nîrânjan* (Sufic); 3. *Gîrbhâwali* (story of the creation); 4. *Das Avatâr, Nâno* and *Moṭo* (two versions of the well-known mythological history of the world, narrating the events which took place under the ten successive incarnations of the Deity); 5. *So Kîrîya* (100 religious rites); 6. *Ârâdh* (prayers); 7. *Vînodh* (lamentations); 8. *Gâvantrî* (story of the creation); 9. *Atharv Vedh* (an imitation of the *Attharva Veda*); 10. *Sûrat Samâchâr* (physiognomy); 11. *Budh Avatâr* (the 9th avatar); 12. *Khaṭ Dharsan* (six pilgrimages); 13. *Khaṭ Nîrînjan* (six invisible worlds).

III. Pîr Ḥasan Kabîru'd-dîn: 1. *Aṇant Akhâṛo* (eschatology, description of life after death); 2. *Vel* (*gnans*); 3. *Bharam Gâvantrî* (story of the creation); 4. *Nav Chhugâ* (nine appeals to the Imam); 5. *Hasna Purî* (description of Paradise); 6. *Samvad Pîr Hasan Kabîru'd-dîn wa Kânîpâ Jogi* (contest between the Pîr and a jogi).

IV. Imâm Shâh: 1. *Jugeshwâr Abdu-nâ Gnân* (Sufic); 2. *Mur Gâvantrî* (story of the creation); 3. *Parb Pândav* (the story of the Pandavas); 4. *Sî Ḥarfî* (30 moral rules); 5. *Atharvedî Gâvantrî* (incarnations of the Diety); 6. *Jannat Purî* (description of his journey to Persia); 7. *Satvarṇî Moṭi* (*miracle stories*); 8. *Bâvan Gâṭî* (eschatology: Hell); 9. *Naklank Gîtâ* (avatars of the Imams).

V. Nar Muḥammad Shâh: *Satvarṇi* (history of the Fatimid Imams), and *Satveṇî ji Vel* (on rituals, Imams and Pîrs).

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VI. Pîr Ghulâm 'Alî Shâh (a minor saint, whose grave is found in Keyra, Kachh): *Manhar* (on asceticism and philosophy).

VII. Sat-Gur-Nûr (buried in Nawsari): *Putlâ* (miracles).

It may be noted that there are also several anthologies each containing a selection of one hundred *gnans*, by different *pîrs*. They are simply called "*gnans*," without any special designation.

There were several early historical works which at present are apparently lost. Such was the *Ta'rîkhi Muḥammadiyya* (or *Maḥmûdiyya*), attributed by the author of the *Manâzilu'l-aqṭâb* (on which see further on) to the son of Imam Shah, Nar Muḥammad. But it is quite possible that this is the Persian title of his other well-known work, in Sindhi, the *Satveni-ji Vel* ("Creeper of the True Religion"), which has been repeatedly printed of late. The work is in verse, and is divided into 150 "paths." It gives a kind of legendary history of the Imams and the *pîrs*, in rather florid and bombastic style, chiefly dealing with miracles. Here and there purely moral or religious prescriptions are inserted. It gives some dates, here and there, the latest being 1516 and 1520 A.D. It is quite possible that the author of the *Manâzilu'l-aqṭâb* has based on it various portions of his book, namely those dealing with Imam Shah.

It is not clear whether the next attempted history of the sect has ever been completed. It was undertaken by "Mahdî Ṣâḥib", or Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdî, a great-grandson of Pîr Muḥammad Shâhi Dûla, who flourished in Burhanpur most probably in the first quarter of the XII/XVIIIth c. A manuscript copy of the *Malfûẓâti Mahdî Ṣâḥib* was shown to me by the son of the present *Sajjâda-nishîn*, Sayyid Nûr 'Alî b. Ashraf 'Alî Shâh. The *Malfûẓât* in fact consist of two small fragments, *i.e.*, the initial portions of two different hagiological works, in Persian. The first, about fifteen pages long, contains the story of the origin of the line of pîrs, with biographical information about some of them; this is almost exclusively confined to stories about their miracles. Many of such stories are in verse. The narrative in this fragment ends with Nar Muḥammad. It is not clear whether the work was ever finished, and whether other copies of it exist.

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The value of this work for research is nil. It is merely an attempt to put into a written form the legends which were in circulation, and this was done rather badly. The sequence of names is completely confused. It is said that the pîrs of the line are descendants of the Ithna-'ashari Imam 'Alî Riḍâ, while in the next fragment quite a different genealogy is given. Ṣadru'd-dîn is confounded with Sat Gur Nûr of Nawsari, etc. No dates, no history. Apparently this work is summed up and made the basis of the account which is given in the modern work, *Ta'rîkhi Burhânpûr* (see further on).

The second fragment is just over two pages, and contains the beginning of the genealogy of the line, not from 'Alî Riḍâ, but from Imam Ismâ'îl, whose name, however, is omitted, together with the name of his son and successor, Muḥammad. These perversions, as also those in the preceding fragment, show that these works were intended for the general public, and that the author tried his best to dissociate himself and his ancestors from all connection with Ismailism by suppressing some facts and names in the sectarian tradition, which were scarcely known outside the sect.

It is difficult to find whether there were any other works composed by the leaders of the Imam-Shahis, and dealing with historical matters. But, according to the *Manâzilu'l-aqṭâb*, one of the descendants of Imam Shah, known as Baṛâ Miyã (Sayyid Badru'd-dîn), who flourished in the beginning of the XIXth century, had arranged that a history of the sect should be written, apparently in Persian, under the title of the *Malfûẓi Imâmu'd-dîn, i.e.* "Sayings of Imâm Shâh." This work was chiefly based on oral tradition, and various "Hindi" books that were available (most probably the *Satveni*). It is not clear why it was called "*Malfûẓ*," and what relation it had to Imam Shah, because its narrative is brought down to the time of Baṛâ Miyã himself. It is not certain whether copies of this work still exist.

Apparently soon after this, *i.e.* in the early years of the XIXth century, another work was composed, dealing with some saints, most probably the *pîrs* of the sect. It has the title *Jawâhiru'l-awliyâ'*,

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and its author is Qâḍî[1] Raḥmatu'l-lâh b. Ghulâm Muṣṭafâ, of Aḥmadâbâd. Here it is again doubtful whether copies of this work exist. It is merely referred to on a few occasions in the *Manâzilu'l-aqṭâb*, a later work of the same author.

This work, with the full title *Manâzilu'l-aqṭâb wa basâtînu'l-aḥbâb*, was apparently compiled soon after 1237/1822, probably also under the patronage of the same Sayyid Baṛâ Miyã, who is profusely eulogised here. The reasons of his interest in the history of his sect were by no means Platonic. There were serious doubts as to the genuineness of his genealogy, and thus of his claims to the headship of the community. Probably in order to give the book a larger circulation, by making it appeal to a wider circle of readers, many matters dealing with the history of Gujrat, its Sufic and other saints, etc., were added.

The work, is a large volume of over 730 pages,[2] and is composed in a fairly clear, though provincial Persian. It opens with a short doxology and a short preface in which the author explains the purpose of his work, which is to give a history of the sect, and biographies of different saints of Gujrat. Then he proceeds with laudatory accounts of the Prophet, of the twelve Imams of the Ithna-'asharis, and a number of biographies of some famous Sufis of India. Then, on pages 137-315, he narrates the story of the sect of the Imam-Shahis, beginning with the biography of Imam Shah himself. Apparently here the original version had to end, as the author, in the strain of different *khâtimas*, again mentions the title of the work, and invokes the usual blessings. But probably having changed his mind, he adds almost as much as the earlier portion of his work, discussing various subjects: a short history of Gujrat, from the earliest times, and its kings (mostly, as he

1 It is doubtful whether the author was particularly learned; his surname *qâḍî* would not necessarily imply his being a judge. It is quite possible that he descended from a judge's family, and the title *qâḍî* was hereditary in it, just as this happens with the title *shaykh*.

2 The size of the pages is 9 and ⅞ of an inch by 5 and three quarters, 13 lines to a page, three and three quarters of an inch long. Thick hand-made paper; handwriting is bold, not calligraphic, but clearly legible; many orthographical mistakes. Headings in red.

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himself mentions, abbreviated from the *Mir'âti Sikandarî*, the well-known work of Sikandar b. Muḥammad Manjhû Akbar, who wrote in 1020/1611), and then a long series of biographies of Sufic and other saints of Gujrat, tombs and shrines of Ahmadabad, of its districts, Hindu places of worship, topography of Ahmadabad, various sects which are found there, etc. All this is almost verbatim taken from the *khâtima* of the well-known history of Gujrat, the *Mir'âti Aḥmadî*, by 'Alî Muḥammad Khân who has begun it in 1161/1748, and completed in 1174/1761.[1] The author followed his original so slavishly that in some places he refers to 1173/1759 as the year current at the time of his writing, which, in reality, was the year in which 'Alî Muḥammad, the author of the *Mir'âti Aḥmadî*, was writing.

It appears that the author never refers to other early works on the history of Gujrat, such as the *Ma'âthiri Maḥmûd-Shâhî*, by 'Abdu'l-Karîm (*ca.* 890/1485);[2] or *Ta'rîkhi Abû Turâb Walî* (*ca.* 995/1587);[3] or *Ta'rîkhi Gujrât*, by Sayyid Maḥmûd b. Munawwari'l-Mulk (*ca.* 980/1573),[4] etc. It is also strange that he probably knew nothing about the work which is specially devoted to the biographies of the Sufic and other saints who flourished in Gujrat, namely the *Gulzâri abrâr*, by Muḥammad Ghawthî b. Ḥasan b. Mûsâ Shaṭṭârî, who completed it soon after 1022/1613, and dedicated it to Jahângîr.[5]

The copy of the *Manâzilu'l-aqtâb*, which I had a chance to peruse due to the courtesy of Sayyid Ṣadru'd-dîn who is in charge of the dargâh of Pîr Sat Gor Nûr at Nawsari, apparently is unique.

Navsari

1 It was repeatedly lithographed; the latest, printed edition, forming vol. xxxiii of the Gaekwad Oriental Series, is still incomplete, and not free from mistakes.

2 See about it C. Rieu, The Catalogue of the Persian MSS in the British Museum, III, 996.

3 See *ibid.*, III, 997.

4 See E. Sachau and H. Ethé, Catalogue of the Persian, etc., MSS in the Bodleian Library, No. 271.

5 See W. Ivanow, Catalogue of the Persian MSS in the (old) collections of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (vol. I, 1924), No. 259, where a complete list of biographies given in the work is offered. There is another copy of the same work in the Hyderabad State library; it is not as old as the Calcutta copy.

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It may therefore be added here that its orthography has many peculiarities which considerably affect the spelling of the proper names found in it. This especially applies to the passion for nasalisation which the author,—or perhaps the scribe,—displays, by writing *shumân*, *Mawlânân*, *Bhrûnj*, etc., for *shumâ*, *Mawlânâ*, Bharûch, etc. But not content with this, he almost always adds an initial *n* to the forms of the Substantive verb when they follow such nasalized long *â*, as in ...*shumân nast*... for ...*shumâ ast*, etc. But he always writes *chunî* for *chunîn*.

Kabiruddin

Sadruddin Uchh

Shamsi Tabriz Multan

During a tour in Northern India in November 1935, visiting several shrines of the ancient *pîrs* of the sect, I found yet another Manuscript, in Urdu, in possession of the *mutawallî* of the shrine of Pîr Ḥasan Kabîru'd-dîn, situated within about a mile's distance from the ancient town of Uchh (now in Bahawalpur State). It is a kind of a notebook which contains the genealogy and some stories about the miracles performed by different early *pîrs*. The owner simply called it the *Shajara*, i.e. "genealogical tree." A slightly different copy of apparently the same work was also shown to me at the shrine of Pîr Ṣadru'd-dîn, some fifteen miles further South.[1] Apparently yet another copy belongs to the *mutawallî* of the shrine of Shamsi Tabrîz, in Multan, but I had no chance of seeing it.

The *Shajara* is chiefly devoted to the genealogy of the Sayyids who own the shrines, and regard the early saints as their own ancestors. About these they have the most fantastic stories of their miracles, and only very few dates which for the most part are utterly unreliable. It is quite obvious therefore that the *Shajara* was compiled at a late period, and probably contains little or no original information.

2. *History of the Sect.*

Having given an account of the sources of information about the sect, we may try to arrange here systematically the materials which are so far available.

[1] In the copy which I saw in the shrine of Pîr Ṣadru'd-dîn, the author of the *Shajara* calls himself Fayḍ Muḥammad, *maddâḥi jinâbi Amîru'l-mu'minîn 'alay-hi's-salâm*, son of the late Khwâja Amîr Muḥammad, a descendant of Khwâja Anṣârî. It is possible that he was in reality not the author, but merely a copyist, who later on added some material from himself.

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According to the tradition preserved by the Khoja community, who represent the parent sect from which the Imam-Shahis seceded in the beginning of the XVIth c., the movement was started in the XIVth c. by several Ismaili missionaries who came from Persia soon after the fall of the stronghold of Alamut (654/1256). The learned and wise missionaries, coming to India, first of all took up the study of the local languages, Sanskrit, and the literature of Hinduism, which they mastered perfectly. By judicious combination of the tenets of Hinduism with those of Islam, they paved the road to the latter, facilitating the conversion of a great many Hindus. They expounded their teachings after Hindu models and standards, in versified sermons, written in *ślokas*, in different local dialects. Such hymns, or versified didactic or ecstatic treatises, were called *gnans*, from Sanskrit *jnanam*, knowledge. They vary in their contents from almost pure Sufism to pure Hinduism. It is generally accepted that in the earliest times they were not written, but simply committed to memory by the faithful; it was only much later that they were written down in Sindhi (Khojki) characters. Many of them are in old Sindhi, but there are also many in old Panjabi, Hindi, Gujrati, and in mixed patois. Sometimes one and the same *gnan* would contain separate verses, or even sentences, in different dialects. Their grammar is often irregular, and the metre faulty.

An analysis of the doctrine and of various historical indications may suggest a certain amount of scepticism about this theory of the origin of the sect as narrated by this tradition. But the question is far too complex to be raised here. It may therefore be postponed till some other occasion. *Satveni-ji Vel* is the earliest of the available sectarian sources of historical information; it was composed by Nar Muḥammad, son of Imam Shah, who states that the original ancestor of the *pîrs*, or the heads of the sect, was the great saint of Multan, now popularly known as Shamsi Tabrîz, whose grave is still the place of worship. The local ideas about the saint, energetically supported by his supposed descendants, the *mutawallîs* of the shrine, are quite definite: he is the same mysterious darwish who exercised such a great influence upon Jalâlu'd-dîn Rûmî, the author of the great

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Mathnawî.[1] Many extraordinary legends are told about him; there is a Hindu temple, about two miles away from his shrine, called Keshupuri, where he has performed the miracle of bringing down the sun from the sky.

The *Satveni-ji Vel* narrates that he was in reality the Ismaili Imam, Shamsu'd-dîn Muḥammad, the son of Ruknu'd-dîn Khûrshâh, the last Imam of Alamut. According to historical information, he was a small boy when his father was killed. His reality seems to be indubitable, and it is quite probable that he was successfully hidden, and survived the destruction of his family, residing somewhere in Northern Adharbayjan. The *Satveni* gives (in the 94th "Path") 710/1310 as the date on which he abdicated, appointing his son Qâsim, as an Imam, and himself coming to the Panjab as a *pîr*.[2] If this Shamsu'd-dîn is the same person, he would have been more than sixty years of age at that time,—scarcely a suitable age at which one would start the extremely difficult and lengthy study of Sanskrit, Indian dialects, Hindu religious matters, etc., and even after this, apparently achieving his object, to have enough time to make many converts. The story of abdication itself is very doubtful. A small but a suspicious detail is the mention of the Panjab, for at that date Multan and the country around it were still regarded as a part of Sindh.

Some Khojas still believe that Shamsu'd-dîn of Multan was the same person as Shamsu'd-dîn Muḥammad, the son of Ruknu'd-dîn Khûrshâh, but the Imam-Shahis do not. It seems that there are three principal variants of his genealogy.

1 This Shamsi Tabrîz, according to the earliest biographer of Rumi and his associates, Shamsu'd-dîn Aflâkî (who wrote in 754/1353), was killed in Qoniya, in Asia Minor, in 645/1247, *i.e.*, apparently before the birth of Shamsu'd-dîn Muḥammad, the Ismaili Imam. His grave is in Qoniya. It is an interesting fact that in a note on him Nûru'l-lâh Shustarî, in his *Majâlisu'l-mu'minîn*, states that he descended from the "Ismaili headmen" (in the VIth *majlis*, p. 291 of the old Persian lithograph: *ki pidar bar pidari û az a'yâni*—or, as in some other copies,—*dâ'iyâni Ismâ'îliyya bûdand*).

2 It is quite probable that he really died about this date, 710/1310. Anyhow, the famous Ismaili Persian poet, Nizârî Quhistânî (d. *ca.* 720/1320) apparently refers to him as his *mamdûḥ* in some of his poems.

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Apparently the earliest version is preserved in the *Shajara*. It is given in a very perverted and corrupt form, but may be corrected with the help of other sources. According to this version, Shamsu'd-dîn was a descendant of Imam Ismâ'îl, but belonged to a line quite independent from that of the Persian Ismaili Imams. A correct form of it is given in the *khâtima* of the *Mir'âti Aḥmadî* (mentioned above), and is orally preserved by the faithful in Pîrâna (cf. further). It is as follows :

1. Imâm Ismâ'îl b. Ja'far ; 2. Muḥammad b. Ismâ'îl ; 3. Ismâ'îl II (in different versions also called Imâmu'd-dîn, or Musâfir, or Musâfir ibn Imâmi'd-dîn,—all obviously being his later surnames); 4. Manṣûr,[1] or Muḥammad Manṣûr ; 5. Ghâlib, or Ghâlibu'd-dîn, or Ghâlibdîn (obviously later modifications) ; 6. 'Abdu'l-Majîd (in the oral tradition—Ṣâdiq) ; 7. Mustanṣir bi'l-lâh (orally simply Muḥammad),—very strange and surprising ; 8. Aḥmad Hâdî ; 9. Hâshim ; 10. Muḥammad ; 11. Maḥmûd (orally Mushafar, *sic*) ; 12. Muḥibbu'd-dîn ; 13. Khâliqu'd-dîn, Khâliqdîn, Khâlid, Khûbdîn, *i.e.* obviously 'Abdu'l-Khâliq, as in the *Mir'ât* ; 14. Mu'min or 'Abdu'l-Mu'min ; 15. Islâmu'd-dîn, Islâm Shâh, Salâmu'd-dîn ; 16. Ṣalâḥu'd-dîn, or Ṣâliḥdîn, or Ṣâliḥjî ; 17. Shamsu'd-dîn.[2]

This gives fifteen generations for about 500 years, or 33 years per generation,—which seems not improbable. The *Shajara* adds that the ancestors of Shamsu'd-dîn were all settled in Sabzawâr,

[1] The best known and authoritative work on genealogy of the descendants of 'Alî, the *'Umdatu'ṭ-ṭâlib fi ansâb âl 'Alî Ibn Abî Ṭâlib*, by Aḥmad Ibn 'Inaba (d. *ca.* 825/1422), cf. Brockelmann, Gesch. d. A. Lit., II, 199, mentions only two of Ismâ'îl II's sons, Aḥmad and Muḥammad. It is possible that the second of them really had the surname Manṣûr. But further on there is no likeness between both these lines. Such names as Ghâlib, Mustanṣir bi'l-lâh, etc., appear quite strange for that period, and most probably are the result of various mistakes and confusion in the old MSS, even if they are genuine.

[2] The *Shajara* makes a complete mess of this genealogy, and mixes up different names, while omitting others. The same is the case with the modern work, *Baḥru'l-ansâb* (lith. Bombay, 1335), II, 139-140. The *Khoja Vratant*, and the *Gulzâre Shams* on the whole coincide quite well, as also the *Tarbiyati du'â*, the Khoja prayer book (in Gujrati).

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in the province of Ghaznî, *i.e.* really Isfizâr, a town South of Herat.[1] It further states that Shamsu'd-dîn himself was born in Ghaznî, on the 17th Rajab 560/30-v-1165, *i.e.* about a hundred years *before* the fall of Alamut. The *Shajara* makes him come to Multan in 598/1201, and permits him to live till 675/1276, thus ascribing him a life of 115 years (the *Satveni* does not give the date of his death).

What may be regarded as a later version, is the one which is suggested in the *Satveni*. It makes Shamsu'd-dîn of Multan the same person as Shamsu'd-dîn Muḥammad, the Ismaili Imam, the son of Imam Ruknu'd-dîn Khûrshâh of Alamut. As we have seen above, according to this story, he abdicated in favour of his son Qâsim, and came to India as a *pîr*. It is quite easy to see why the author of the *Satveni*, Nar Muḥammad, would prefer this particular version. As will be seen further on, he proclaimed himself an Imam. But according to the most fundamental beliefs of Ismailism an Imam can only be a son of an Imam. As he surely could not pretend to be a son of an Imam, he had to invent a theory of his descent from the line of the Imams, and the coincidence in the names of his ancestor, Shamsu'd-dîn, with the name of Shamsu'd-dîn the Imam, offered an easy opportunity.

The third, apparently the latest version is that which makes Shamsu'd-dîn descend from the seventh Imam of the Ithna-'asharis, Mûsâ Kâẓim b. Ja'far. Quite possibly the sect, and its Sayyids, for the purpose of the "protective dissembling" (*taqiyya*), had to represent themselves officially as belonging to the only Shi'ite sect which to some extent was tolerated and left unmolested by the fanatics in this part of the world. Exactly the same thing was going on with the Ismailis of Persia and Central Asia. Such practice of the *taqiyya*, observed for very long periods, made the Ithna-'ashari religion so familiar to many Ismailis that they could sincerely believe that they really belong to it. At present all the descendants of these saints, who are in charge of the shrines, regard

[1] Sam'ânî in his famous dictionary does not mention any of these saints amongst the famous Isfizârîs.

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themselves as Ithna-'ashari.[1] This is one of the strangest instances in the history of religions, for the Sayyids, who are the religious leaders of the sect, themselves belong to quite a different religion, which always was, and still is bitterly hostile to the religion of the Imam-Shahis, who are their followers!

Pirana shrine gold embroidered genealogical tree of twelve imams

At the shrine of Imam Shah himself, at Pîrâna, near Ahmadabad, there is on the wall a gold embroidered genealogical tree of the twelve Imams, but the name of Ismâ'îl and Muḥammad b. Ismâ'îl also figure there. Being asked how the sectarians could at once recognize as the true Imams two mutually excluding lines, they simply tell that so it is, and it is not their business to bother with seeking for the reasons, why and how this should be so.

It is impossible to ascertain which of these three versions of Shamsu'd-dîn's genealogy is correct, or whether any of these is reliable.[2] But from Shamsu'd-dîn downwards the line is quite clear. He was succeeded by his son Naṣîru'd-dîn, and the latter by his son Shihâbu'd-dîn. Both are regarded as *pîrs*, but nothing at all is known about them. Most probably they occupied the office for only a very short time, and were not remarkable in any way.[3]

1 The descent from 'Alî ar-Riḍâ is attributed to Shamsu'd-dîn, the *pîr* of Multan, in the well-known hagiological work, *Akhbâru'l-akhyâr*, by 'Abdu'l-Ḥaqq Dihlawî (d. *ca.* 1053/1643); apparently from this book this genealogy was introduced in modern works such as the *Khazînatu'l-aṣfiyâ*'.

2 In the genealogy of Shamsu'd-dîn, as it is preserved orally in Pîrâna at present, the surname *Chowt* is given to him, and he is called Shamsi Chowt. Firishta (lith. Nawalkishore edition, II, 336-7), quotes from the *Ta'rîkhi Rashîdî* of Mirzâ Ḥaydar a passage referring to a missionary of the fifteenth or sixteenth c. in Kashmir, called Shamsu'd-dîni Chowt. He preached the beliefs of the Nûr-Bakhshî sect, apparently a variety of 'Alî-Ilâhism, and obviously was not connected with Shamsu'd-dîn of Multan. In spite of my search I could not ascertain what his surname Chowt meant. In Gujrati *chowt* means a lock of hair at the top of the head, left by Hindus.

3 In the *Ta'rîkhi Burhânpûr* (cf. further on) the name of the grandfather of Shamsu'd-dîn is given as Na'îru'd-dîn, and the father as Shihâbu'd-dîn but Ṣadru'd-dîn is made the son of Shams. Most probably this is simply a mistake in the sequence of the names, and Na'îru'd-dîn, whose name should be read Naṣîru'd-dîn, was the son of Shamsu'd-dîn.

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The son of the later *pîr*, Ṣadru'd-dîn, most probably was the real founder of the sect. To him belong many important *gnans* and other works, and they are said to bear traces of high inspiration. Both the *Satveni* and the *Shajara* tell a few miracle stories about him. The first does not give the date of his death. The *Shajara* offers 689/1290 as the date of his birth, and 782/1380, as that of his death, but both dates appear to be unreliable. He is buried about fifteen miles away from Uchh, in Bhawalpur State. There are no inscriptions on his tomb or mausoleum. [1]

His son and successor, the third great *Pîr*, Abû Qalandar Ḥasan Kabîru'd-dîn was born, according to the *Shajara*, in 726/1326, lived exactly 150 lunar years, and died in Uchh in 876/1471. The *Manâzilu'l-aqṭâb*, which, curiously, does not give his biography, incidentally gives the date of his death as 875/1470. Not only is such longevity quite remarkable, but it is quite extraordinary that when he died at the age of 150, his son, Imam Shah, was only 19 or even 15 years of age; thus he was born to him when he was about 130 years old. Thus all these dates are made of the same stuff as the miracle stories. The *Satveni* in the 109th Path, gives the date of his death as 853/1449, which seems to be more probable. He is buried within about a mile's distance of Uchh. No inscriptions, except repair records, quite modern, are found on the mausoleum. [2]

He was succeeded by his brother, Tâju'd-dîn,[3] who is recognized as a *Pîr* by the Khojas, but not by the Imam-shahis. Nothing authentic is known about him. He is referred to in the *Satveni*, if this is not a later interpolation.

[1] He is locally known under the name of Ḥâjî Ṣadar Shâh. A mela, or fair, is held every year on his *'urs*. The nearest village is apparently called Jetur. The place is about 12 or 13 miles from the nearest railway station, Chaudhuri.

[2] He is locally called Ḥasan Daryâ. It is interesting that the *Satveni* gives many miracle stories about his, and his father Ṣadru'd-dîn's journeys to Persia, for visiting (*dîdâr*) the Imâm.

[3] He was buried in the village Shahturel, or Juṇ, in Sindh, not far from the station Talhâr (Badin Railway), district Tandoo Bagho. The date of his death is given in the *Gulzare Shams* as 872/1467. The name Shahturel is also applied to the *pîr* himself.

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At the point of the death of *Pîr* Kabîru'd-dîn Ḥasan the story of Imam Shah begins, and is narrated with many legendary details in the *Manâzilu'l-aqṭâb*. But before we proceed any further, it is necessary to introduce a few explanatory remarks which may facilitate the understanding of the narrative.

The dates in the history of the sect usually are very unreliable, confusing, and contradictory. One of the reasons surely must be the absence of reliable records: the date of the event is usually calculated as so many years before, or after the death of so-and-so, or some other remarkable event, and this always is very shaky. Besides, those dates which are given in the Hijri era, are usually transferred into it from the Hindu solar calendar, in quite primitive and inaccurate ways. Thus there is bound to be a great deal of inaccuracy.

It is also necessary to explain the implications of the ambiguous term *pîr*. It means "old," and "old man" in Persian; in early Persian Sufism it was used as an equivalent of the Arabic *shaykh*, *i.e.* an (old) experienced Sufi, who could guide others. In India it was widely used at the period of the great importance of Sufic organisations.[1]

Persian Ismailism had great affinity with Sufism; in some instances Sufic elements probably outweighed the Ismailitic in various doctrines. Apart from this, a certain vagueness of the ideas and irregularities in the observation of the prescribed practices, regarded as permissible to Sufis, always excellently suited all kinds of sectarians who differed in some respects from the orthodox standards.[2] Therefore it was quite easy that the early Ismaili missionaries and saints appeared to the world at large, to the uninitiated, as Sufic *pîrs*.[3] Probably due to continuous use in this

1 The Gujrati term is *Gur*, i.e. *guru*, really meaning teacher. The word *Sat* in the names such as Sat Gur Nûr, etc. means "true,"—*pîri ḥaqîqî*, etc.

2 Cf. Firishta, II, 337 (of the Nawalkishore lithograph) in what he narrates about Shamsi Chowt, mentioned above: *dar panâhi taṣawwuf gurîkhta khûd-râ Ṣûfî nâm nihâdand.*

3 According to the *Manâzil* the early *pîrs* really were initiated in the Suhrawardî and other *silsilas*. This seems quite probable because Sufic affiliation were so popular at that time that not only the people with special religious interests, but also laymen belonged to one or several of them. Not long ago so it was in Persia, and I personally saw several Ismailis who belonged to the Ni'matu'l-lâhî order. Initiation in a Sufic *silsila* was approximately something like belonging to a Masonic lodge; the religious persuasion did not interfere with this.

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sense this term in India has become synonymous with the sectarian religious head, teacher, missionary. It has preserved this meaning even later on. But with the gradual evolution of the community, it became applied to the *ḥujjat*, the head priest, or a kind of an Ismaili bishop in charge of a see.[1] With the evolution of this latter idea, the *ḥujjat=pîr* began to be regarded more and more as a kind of superhuman being, the one who guides humanity to the knowledge of the Imam. The ancient Indian ideas about the Divinity of the priest who offers sacrifices, etc., probably also helped the idea of the *pîr* to grow in importance almost as great as the idea of Imam himself. In the Hinduistic mentality of the Imam-Shahis the difference between the Imam and the *Pîr* has almost entirely disappeared. *Pîrs* receive exactly the same epithets as those of the Imams, or even God Himself; various miraculous signs and qualities believed to prove the dignity of the Imam are attributed (as in the *Manâzilu'l-aqṭâb*) to the *pîrs*. Thus the alternation of *pîrs* and Imams in the same genealogical line has become quite natural in the eyes of the followers. It must be noted, however, that the term *pîr* is not ordinarily used by the Persian or Central Asian Ismailis in this sense; they would rather, in a mystical sense, apply it to the Imam himself.[2] In ordinary language the term *pîr* is applied in Central Asia to local village darwish teachers, or *murshids*.

In the original Ismailism *ḥujjats* were the able, learned priests or missionaries, who, in due course, for their talents, services and abilities, were promoted to the posts of "bishops" of different sees. The office, quite naturally, was never hereditary. But one sees in the sect of the Imam-Shahis that pîrship is hereditary, and that great importance is attached to the direct descent; *pîrs* are appointed to succeed their fathers even when children; their followers swear allegiance to them, etc. All these are developments on Indian soil. They are partly due to Hinduistic ideas, and

1 The doctrine about the spiritual implications of the office of the *ḥujjat* is dealt with in detail in the text edited and translated by me in the "Ismailitica" (Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, vol. VIII, pp. 1-76).

2 Cf. the Dîwân of Imâm-Qulî Khâkî Khurâsânî, ed. by W. Ivanow, Bombay, 1933, verses 1434, 1543, etc.

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partly, most probably, are supported by economical considerations. In Persia the chief thing was the doctrine preached by the *pîr*; his talents and saintliness would draw crowds of *murîds* to him. When he dies, his grave is respected, and some religious people will even visit it and pray at it; but the grave cannot replace the teacher himself. Quite a different thing happens in India, with its different religious ideas and mentality. Here busy people would care little or nothing for what the saint teaches. All that he says, most probably, would be quite unintelligible to them. They will be quite satisfied with the silliest stories about his "miracles," taking no interest in whether they are true or not. So long as so-and-so has all the appearance of an ascetic, and his reputation, by whatever means, spreads, nobody will bother to question his claims. He *himself* becomes the object of worship so long as he is living. And when he dies, his importance may increase thousandfolds, if the people in charge of his tomb possess sufficient commercial talents.[1] His followers, and also strangers will flock from long distances to attend the fairs on certain anniversaries (*'urs*),—a purely Indian custom, which does not exist in Persia. They will bring their cocoanuts, or other offerings of insignificant value, will go through some ceremonies, etc., and then return to their homes with their religious sentiment refreshed at a small cost.

The question of succession, and of recognition of a certain *sajjâda-nishîn*, *makhdûm*, etc., in such cases has great importance,

[1] Those who have not seen with their own eyes how the "grave of a saint" sometimes comes into existence would scarcely believe it. Some ten years ago Calcutta was stirred to excitement one morning when in one of the passages of the principal municipal market, in the centre of the city, a grave was dug, and a "saint" was buried on the spot on which he died, inspite of objections of the authorities. The "saint" was an Indian Christian beggar. But for some reasons his death has caught the fancy of the Muslim mob of petty traders and coolies, who proclaimed him a Muhammadan saint and miracle worker. The situation became so threatening that the authorities even could not well insist on the remains being exhumed and transferred to some cemetery. His grave was ornamented with flowers, etc., some commercially minded people opened shops with sweets, ornaments, etc., nearby; others began to collect money, and visitors began to flock in thousands. With great difficulty the authorities succeeded in putting a stop to all this, and a brick wall was built round the grave.

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but really it has nothing to do with religion. It is quite natural that the family of the deceased saint (and saintly ascetics usually have very large families), would eagerly defend their rights to collect in their favour the offerings of the devotees. Very often, as can also be seen from the history of the Imam-Shahi sect, they are the owners of the buildings erected to protect the tombs. The tomb is usually regarded as their joint property. As their head, and official representative, a direct successor of the saint, is appointed. In the cases of dispute the office is snatched up by the most energetic and unscrupulous, and the rightful, but not successful heir may be deprived of his rights. There is not the slightest pretence even to connect the hereditary occupation of the post with anything like ascetic virtues, learning, pious life, etc.

Such is the state of things, as far as can be seen, all over India. It presents many great difficulties. But the case of the Imam-Shahis is especially aggravated by an institution which is apparently quite unique in the practice of the Muhammadan organisations. It is the evil institution of the *kâkâs*. Originally a *kâkâ* (according to the *Mir'âti Aḥmadî*) was the headman of the converted Hindu community, appointed by the *pîr*, or his missionary, from amongst his fellow-converts; his duty was to instruct those who were not strong in the religion, to settle their disputes, and, the most important, to collect the religious taxes, which he had to forward to the *pîr*. In the Imam-Shahi community all the converts were Hindus. For tactical reasons, and for self protection, many kept their conversion secret. But even those who did not conceal this preferred not to sever their connection with their caste, and were permitted outwardly to comply with the prescriptions of their original religion.

Thus the original *kâkâs* played an important part as go-betweens, bringing about mutual understanding between the missionaries and their converts, who would follow them only in case they were advised and directed by the *kâkâs* to do so. Apparently this institution was introduced at an early period not only in petty village communities, but also penetrated into the centre. As narrated by the author of the *Manâzil*, who probably is right, the immediate cause of the final legalisation of the position of the *kâkâs* in the centre were the rivalries and quarrels of the sons of Nar

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Muḥammad Shâh (the author of the *Satveni*). In order to create an apparatus for more or less impartial distribution of income amongst the different quarreling members of his family after his death, he arranged that the taxes and offerings should be collected by a specially appointed head *kâkâ*, who would make the distribution, keep up the shrines, etc. He was appointed for life, had to take vow of celibacy, and receive for himself only his food and his clothing. Thus having made him safe from temptation to misappropriate the funds passing through his hands, the Sayyids expected him to work dispassionately, as a kind of a machine. But in reality, as the whole history of the sect shows, the *kâkâs* proved to be an inexhaustible source of intrigue and misery to the community, which has brought about the complete ruin of the sect.

Keeping all this in mind, we may return now to the history of the Imam-Shahi community.

According to the *Manâzil*, Imâm-Shâh, whose full name was Imâmu'd-dîn 'Abdu'r-Raḥîm b. Ḥasan, was born in Uchh either on the 27th Rab. I, or on the 11th Jum. II 856/1452. As shown above, his son Nar Muḥammad says that his father, Ḥasan Kabîru'd-dîn, died in 853/1449. The difference is small, and it is quite possible that Imam Shah was a small boy when his father died. The *Manâzil* tells that he was 19 or even 15 years of age at that time. It is interesting to note that almost all *pîrs* in his book succeed their fathers at the age either of twelve or fifteen. Qâḍî Raḥmatu'l-lâh gives the name of his mother, 'Ârif Khâtûn, and a great deal of purely obstetric details of his birth (which are almost literally repeated further on in connection with the births of many other *pîrs* of this line), intended to indicate the high and supernatural position of the child. As usual, the authority of the long-suffering Imam Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq is made responsible for all this nonsense.

The narrative of the *Manâzil* entirely consists of legends and miracle stories which are scarcely worth repeating, except, perhaps, as an example of their style. Imam Shah, still a young boy, is not in Uchh at the hour of his father's death, but miraculously receives information, and arrives just at the moment when his corpse is carried in procession. He immediately starts demanding

Full name
1) Birth of imam shah in year 1452
2) Converted from Hijri = 26-Apr-1452 or 08-Jul-1452

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his "share"[1] from his brothers (he had seventeen of them). When they object to such demands, at this most unsuitable moment, the hand of the dead saint comes out of the bier, with a rosary and a piece of sugar, gives it to Imam Shah, and the voice bids him to go to Persia, and to demand his "share" from the "brother" of his father. Imam Shah, still a young boy, immediately starts for Persia, reaches Kirman in 21 days, though there were still no motor cars in use at that time, alights at the house of a certain Ghulâm Muḥammad, a trusted servant of the Shâhi wâlâ-jâh (whom the voice of Kabîru'd-dîn calls Mîr Sayyid 'Abdu'l-Ḥayy, or 'Abdu'l-Ḥaqq b. Imâm Ismâ'îl b. Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq). He is received in audience by the latter, and the *ni'mat*, which he was seeking for, is handed over to him. "This is a great mystery," as the author says,—*în sirrî 'st bâṭinî*. It is interesting that in his book the author never calls this person an Imam, but usually a *sajjâda-nishîn*, or something in this strain.

Imamshah came to Gujarat in 1470-71

Then Imam Shah returns to India, and goes to Gujrat.[2] All this apparently takes place in one and the same year, 875/1470-1, as can be inferred from the narrative of the *Manâzil*. The independent Muslim dynasty of Gujrat, which ruled over the province between 799/1396 and 980/1572, out of political considerations encouraged Muhammadan missionaries. It seems to be a fact that Imam Shah has come there in the reign of the most prominent king of that dynasty, Shâh Maḥmûdi Bêgṛâ (863-917/1458-1511).

[1] It is not clear what kind of "share" (as in the *Satveni*), or "fortune," *ni'mat* (as in the *Manâzil*) he expected. Most probably all these legends, which were put in circulation much later on, when he was already the recognised head of the Gujrati branch, allude to the pîrship. As can be seen from the narrative of the *Manâzil*, the *pîrs* were so regularly succeeded by their youngest sons that it is easy to infer the existence of a firmly established custom. Popular belief apparently extended it back, upon Imam Shah himself, and it is quite possible that his demands for the *ni'mat*, i.e., pîrship after his father, were entirely based, in popular psychology, simply on the fact that he was the youngest son of the deceased.

[2] According to the *Khoja Vratant*, which does not mention the source of its information, Ḥasan Kabîru'd-dîn died in 1449 A.D.; Imam Shah came to Gujrat, to Atuna, in 1452; in 1454 he married the daughter of a local Sufic saint, Shâhi 'Âlam,—Nar Muḥammad was born from this union. In 1468 he founded Pîrâna.

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Anyhow, the tradition firmly connects both these names. Imam Shah settles at Pîrâna, near the village Girâmth,[1] which still exists, situated about nine miles from Ahmadabad, three miles off the Cambay road ; in some books this place is also called Imâmpûra. At present it is a necropolis of the sect, with only a few families of Sayyids and *kâkâs* staying there. According to the *Manâzil*, Imam Shah died there on the 27th Ram. 919/18-xi-1513 ; the *Satveni* gives 926/1520, *i.e.* again very near to the former work.(2)

1) Death of imam shah 18-Nov-1513
2) Conversion from Islamic date comes to 06-Dec-1513

All these legends most probably completely confuse the real events. It may be noted that Imam Shah has himself written an account of his journey to Persia to visit the Imam. How invaluable a document would it have been for the student of Ismailism if only this saint had sanely and sobermindedly described what he has seen, on the lines of his early predecessor, the great Nâṣiri Khusraw, in his most admirable *Safar-nâma* ! But this was quite beyond his capacities. His *Jannatpûrî* is a fantastic tale, full of miraculous stuff and vague exaggerations.(3) Its contents are to some extent expanded and embellished in the *Satveni* (Path 111 sq.). It is narrated there that seventeen brothers of Imam Shah have refused to give him his "share," and harassed him very much until he left for Gujrat. All seventeen died very soon. The Imam of the time comes to know that now there is only one of the *pîr's* family left, and he sends a letter to Imam Shah through a certain Chandan Vir, or Ḥaydar Beg.

Nothing is said whether the letter summoned him to Persia, but, anyhow, Imam Shah decided to go there. After 37 days'

[1] At present it is officially called Girâmtha, but in different books this difficult word is differently spelt as Girmatha, Gurmatha, etc.

(2) Over the entrance door of the shrine of Imam Shah in Pîrâna a small brass plate, or rather a fragment of it, is fixed. In a bad, and apparently quite modern handwriting there is stated that the date of his birth can be found from the word *nuṣrat*, i.e. 50+90+200+400=740/1340-1, and the date of his death is the end of Ramaḍân 815/ end of December 1412. The building was repaired and whitewashed in 819/1416 by a certain *kâkâ*. The date of the death of Imam Shah is given as 815/1412 also on the fly leaf of a (lithographed) copy of the Coran which lies near the tomb.

[3] It was printed in Bombay in 1926. There is also a long *gnan*, called *Janaza*, which gives another version of the same story.

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journey he comes to the shore either of a river, or of a sea. He entered the sea, and travelled forty days by it. It is thus quite possible, that he really took the usual route which Ismailis used to take on their pilgrimage to Persia, namely the sea route through Hormuz, and later Bandar Abbas which sprang up near it. Unfortunately Imam Shah has a great aversion to geographical names, and therefore his itinerary remains quite obscure. At last he reaches the *Kahk*, apparently for *Kâkhak*, which only means a summer villa or palace, in which probably the Imam resided. Nothing is said as to where it was. The name of Ghulâm Muḥammad, referred to in the *Manâzil*, is also mentioned here; he is called a *mukhî*. Imam Shah asks the Imam to permit him to see Paradise (Path 114). This is permitted to him; he goes there, and sees many ancient saints, both Hindu and Muhammadan. With his own grandfather, *Pîr* Ṣadru'd-dîn, he even has a long and instructive interview. Quite obviously, this strange Gujrati *Divina Comedia* was simply a peculiar way of partly explaining eschatological beliefs, and partly, in the form of prophecies of the great saint, interviewed after death, to popularise the general plans and intentions of the missionary activity of the sect. But it may be noted that all this the faithful take quite literally.

Returning from Paradise, and taking leave of the Imam, the saint returns to India, and settles in Gujrat, at Pîrâna, in which a *qubba*, or mausoleum, was built. At its foundation was laid a golden brick which Imam Shah has brought with him from Paradise.

Thus, on the whole, it is possible that Imam Shah really visited Persia, and was sent to preach in Gujrat, where he had great success amongst the rural population. It is also quite possible that this happened during the reign of Shâh Maḥmûdi Bêgṛâ, and that he died some time in the first quarter of the XVIth century. It seems doubtful whether the mausoleum in which he, and his son Nar Muḥammad, are buried is preserved exactly as it was built at his time.[1]

[1] As it is at present, it was obviously repaired and rebuilt on so many occasions that its original features must have disappeared long ago. It does not resemble the peculiar Ahmadabadistyle of its Hindu-Muslim architecture, is thickly whitewashed, and has no stone carvings whatever. The building is still further disfigured by the newly made corrugated iron sheds, and other ugly additions.

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2 3

Nar muhammad Birth

Imam Shah was succeeded by his son Muḥammad, who is usually called either Nûr Muḥammad, or Nar Muḥammad, which imply his being an Imam.[1] According to the *Manâzil*, he was one year old when his grandfather, Ḥasan Kabîru'd-dîn, died. As Qâḍî Raḥmatu'l-lâh gives 875/1470-1 as the date of his death, it must be assumed that Nar Maḥammad was born in 874/1469-70, or about that date, and this, perhaps, is fairly possible.

It is not stated how long after the death of his father he undertook a reform which had very serious consequences. The author of the *Manâzil* tells that a certain Khêtâ, apparently a Hindu convert, was the head of 18.000 converted Hindus. He used to collect the *dasondh*, or *'ushr*, *i.e.* the religious tax, and send these moneys to *Pîr* Ḥasan Kabîru'd-dîn. As the latter was probably by this time dead for more than fifty years, it is obvious that his name here stands generally for the head of the Ismaili missionaries in India. The latter, as Raḥmatu'l-lâh says, used to send out of these moneys a certain amount (*chîzî*) to Persia, to the "*sajjâda-nishîn*," *i.e.* the Ismaili Imam. This is an important circumstance, and must be properly noted. Not only was this practice followed during the time of Imam Shah, but it is clear from this that it was carried on even under Nar Muḥammad himself, at the beginning of his rule. Thus the newly converted community of Gujrat so far remained faithful to their Ismaili Imams, who resided in Persia, and were not regarded as a separate sect.

At present the followers of the Imam-Shahi sect deny their connection with Ismailism, and even maintain that the early *pîrs* had nothing to do with it: they were Ithna-'asharis. With their usual confusion they, at the same time, accept the Ismaili Imams who held office before the split, caused by Nar Muḥammad, who is regarded by them as the last Imam; after him Mahdî, the 12th Imam of the Ithna-'asharis, concealed somewhere in a well or cave

[1] The term Nar is a Hindu Divine title, and is regarded as a synonyme of Imam. Nûr is apparently an "Islamization" of the former term. Some purists even make it Nûr 'Alî. It may be noted that Hindu terms and names are profusely applied to these *pîrs*. For instance, Imam Shah is called Indra Imâmdîn Kaylasi (*i.e.* the "Paradisial"), etc.

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How was a separate sect formed

near Samarra, North of Baghdad, is coming to judge at the End of the World. It is, however, quite obvious from all that was said above that the Ismaili origin of the sect is beyond all doubt.

It is impossible to find anything authentic about the real nature of the activities of Nar Muḥammad. All that is recorded in connection with the split is that he ordered the pious Khêtâ to hand him in future all funds collected by him, instead of sending them to Sindh. This obviously amounted to the recognition of Nar Muḥammad as an Imam. Khêtâ flatly refused, a long quarrel, excommunication, etc., resulted, and thus the split was introduced. These early faithful Ismailis apparently were the ancestors of the present Khojas of Gujrat and Kathiawar.[1]

The claims of Nar Muḥammad Shâh to be an Imam were apparently carefully prepared by his propaganda. A lot of miraculous stories were invented and circulated. It was said that when Imam Shah visited the Imam, the latter, realizing the hardships which his followers in India had to endure when travelling to visit him, promised the *pîr* that after the death, he, the Imam, would become incarnated in one of his, Imam Shah's, sons, so-to-say for the convenience of the Indian public. There are various "prophecies" in the same strain scattered about in Imam Shah's *gnans*; probably a careful study might help to find whether they are later interpolations. He even promised that when the final Imam arrived in Pîrâna, the stone dome of his mausoleum would become solid gold. The gold brick, brought from Paradise as mentioned above, is probably one of the numerous details of such stories. The authors of the *Satveni* and of the *Manâzil* do not mention the story about the promise of incarnation, probably because it sounded too un-Islamic. But it is widely known now and every follower of Imam-Shah believes in it.

[1] In the *Satveni*, which is attributed to the authorship of Nar Muḥammad, there are references to *Pîr* Tâju'd-dîn, and admonitions to follow him. The names of the Persian Imams are given up to his own time, and do not end with Islâm Shâh. Probably only a careful critical study may solve the question whether all these are a later interpolation, or whether the *Satveni* was really composed by him.

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The split, caused by Nar Muḥammad's pretentions, has done incalculable harm to his sect. Instead of being followers of Ismailism, the ancient and highly philosophical branch of Islam, with its great cultural traditions and the mentality of a world religion, they have become nothing but a petty community of "Pîrânawallas," a kind of inferior Hindus, and very doubtful Muslims. Anyhow, orthodox Muslims do not regard them as Muslims, and orthodox Hindus do not regard them as Hindus. Such a position of utter isolation can only be endured in the primitive conditions of village life, illiteracy and ignorance. As soon as the standard of living, education, etc., rise, the followers cease to find satisfaction in the faith of their forefathers, and turn to the religion of the more cultured strata. Thus the sect automatically loses all its cultural elements, and rapidly sinks deeper and deeper, with no prospect of early regeneration. So it is at present, and most probably so it always was in the past.

The *Manâzilu'l-aqṭâb* gives 940/1533-4 as the date of the death of Nar Muḥammad. Most probably it is approximately correct. In the *Satveni*, his work, the latest dates which are referred to are 1516 and 1520. He is buried in the same mausoleum as his father in Pîrâna.

2) D: Nar muhammad

According to the *Manâzil*, he had several sons, the two oldest being Jalâlu'd-dîn and Muṣtafâ. The author, who writes to defend the point of view of the Âṭhṭhiyâ branch of the sect,[1] apparently perverts the sequence and the nature of the events very considerably. According to him Nar Muḥammad had appointed one of his younger sons as his successor, namely Sa'îdu'd-dîn, popularly called Ṣayd-Khân (so his name is written in the *Manâzil*, in which the orthography is not of a high standard. Perhaps it is intended for Sayyid or Sa'îd Khân). At the same time Raḥmatu'l-lâh states that Nar Muḥammad advised him to go away, and to find a *jamâ'at*, *i.e.* to convert a community, for himself. From what is narrated further on it is clear that one of the elder sons remained in Pîrâna as the successor of his father—which one, cannot be determined from this work. Several stories are added

3) B: Sayd Khan

[1] This term comes into general use only about a century later, and will be explained further on.

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about cruelty and vileness of Sa'îd Khân's elder brothers, their intrigues and even murderous attacks. The author vaguely states that the party of the "old servants" (*khâdimâni qadîm*), i.e. most probably the whole of the older generation, "remained faithful to the *mazâr*, tomb, of Imam Shah".[1] This expression again and again reappears in the course of the book, and it is not easy to gauge its real implications. It probably does not mean that, disgusted with the quarrels of the Sayyids, the "old servants" refused to follow any of the competing aspirants to pîrship. Most probably adhering only to the chief *kâkâ*, was merely a way to keep outside the quarrels, without giving any preference to the members of any line of the Sayyids.[2]

Jalaluddin

Said Khan

3) D:1572

From different circumlocutions and occasional slips of the author of the *Manâzilu'l-aqṭâb*, one may infer that the shrine most probably remained in charge of the son of Nar Muḥammad, Jalâlu'd-dîn, and his descendants, for quite a long time, at least over a century, and the *pîrs* of the younger, the Âṭhṭhiyâ line, i.e. that of Sa'îd Khân, were almost always moving about the country.

It is not clear whether Sa'îd Khân was really exiled by his brothers, or was led by his adventurous spirit, but, anyhow, we see him wandering as a missionary, preaching in Surat, Burhanpur, and the towns of the Deccan and Karnatak. He converts Hindus by thousands, of course, and works numerous miracles. Apparently towards the end of his life some changes happened again in Pîrâna, perhaps due to the question of succession arising again on the death of one of his brothers. The author narrates,—as usual on such occasions,—about a deputation arriving to invite him to return to Pîrâna. For some reason he accepts their invitation, and returns. On the 26th Jum. II 980/3-xi-1572 he dies there,

1 *Iṭâ'ati khûd-hâ ba-ṭarafi mazâri Sayyid Imâmu'd-dîn wa kâkâ'i waqti ân ḥaḍrat burdand.*

2 It appears that there was a senior line of the *pîrs* which became extinct in 1075/1664-5. The names of the *pîrs* are: Shihâbu'd-dîn, Jalâl Shâh, Murtaḍâ Shâh, and Muḥammad Ashraf. But it is quite possible that the principle of heredity and strict sequence, from father to son, was not always followed. The different branches of the community, without any serious reason would abandon a *pîr*, but later on would flock to him, as appears from this history.

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and is buried near his father's grave, in spite of the strong opposition of his relatives. The date of his death, of course, is open to doubt, and can be accepted only as approximate.

He was succeeded by his son, Sayyid Abû Âli Hâshim (*sic*) Muḥammad Ṣâliḥ, who was only 12 or 13 years of age at the time of his father's death. 1559-60

4) B:

The author most diplomatically tries to conceal the fact that Muḥammad Ṣâliḥ was not at once recognized by his followers as a *pîr*. He says that the members of the *jamâ'at* decided to postpone swearing allegiance (*bay'at*) to him until the representatives of all castes converted by him, "from far and near," came together. This happens on several occasions in the course of the history of the sect, and is always expressed in approximately the same words.

Most probably, in ordinary language, this means nothing more than he and his party had to carry on a long propaganda before they met with some support. The author even mentions that the *pîr* had to submit to a regular examination by his intending followers, who put him many questions, with the obvious intention of gaining some points to their advantage. Nothing is said here about the *Imâmat* of the saint, as in the case of the preceding *pîrs*, the author being content with attributing to him the degree of *khilâfat*.

The majority of the sect again "remained faithful to the *mazâr*, or tomb, of Imam Shah," which was in charge of the descendants of the senior line. Special mention is made about the intrigues of Nûr Shâh, the son of Muṣṭafâ, the brother of the late Sa'îd Khân. But Muḥammad Ṣâliḥ apparently had a sufficiently strong following to keep inside the Pîrâna walls; nothing is said about his missionary excursions. He died the 15th Rajab 1021/ 11-ix-1612 (approximately).

4) D:

1597

He was succeeded by his fifteen years old son Abû Muḥammad Hâshim. Apparently the long work of his father (or perhaps some special events in the life of Pîrâna) have considerably strengthened the position of his line. Nothing is said about waiting for the followers from "far and near" to come for swearing allegiance to him. Moreover, it is narrated that, seeing that the graves of his father, Muḥammad Ṣâliḥ, and his grandfather, Sa'îd Khân,

5) B:

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were in a poor condition, he,—most probably some years after his ascension,—decided to erect a decent mausoleum for them, near the shrine of Imam Shah. Nûr Shâh, mentioned above, who was at that time the official keeper of Imam Shah's shrine, and his brother Walan Shâh, fiercely objected to this. From words their opposition rose to armed obstruction, and in a pitched battle between the two parties the supporters of Nûr Shâh were defeated; then the mausoleum was built, as well as a residential house, which later on was known under the name of the *ḥuwaylîyi Râjî Ṭâhira*.

But inspite of this spectacular success, and the death of Nûr Shâh which happened soon after, the enmity and hatred between the two branches of the sect were going on unabated, and the majority "remained faithful to the tomb of Imâm Shâh" when Sayyid Hâshim died on the 15th Shawwâl 1045/23-iii-1636.

5) D:

1624

6) B

He was succeeded by his twelve years old son Muḥammad who later on became known as Muḥammad Shâhi Dûla Burhânpûrî. Apparently the term Âṭhṭhiyâ is now for the first time officially applied to the followers of this line. It means the "party of eight", because the *pîrs* who were successors of Sa'îd Khân were followed by eight different castes and sub-castes. The next party, Sâtiyâs, "the party of seven castes," apparently definitely comes into existence later on; and the last and latest of them are the Panchiyâs, "the party of five". In addition to this there is the party of those "faithful to the tomb of Imâm Shâh", though this seems to be the name for all sorts of dissidents.

સાતીયા
પાંચીયા
For more information read Pirana Satpanthni Pol

The Sâtiyâs formally become known by this name when they separated from the Âṭhṭhiyâs by seceding after the death of Muḥammad Shâh, and following his son Bâlâ Muḥammad; and the Panchiyâs are those who followed Meghji Karbharî, the coachman of Râjî Ṭâhira, the wife of the son of Muḥammad Shâh, Shâhjî Mîrân Shawa'î.

It may be noted that by the time Muḥammad Shâh has become a *pîr* of the Imam-Shahis, many important changes had taken place in Gujrat. For some time illustrious, but now quite degenerate, the dynasty of the Gujrati kings had fallen (in 980/1572) to Akbar, and the distressed conditions of the province were rapidly improving in consequence. From 1014/1605 it was ruled by

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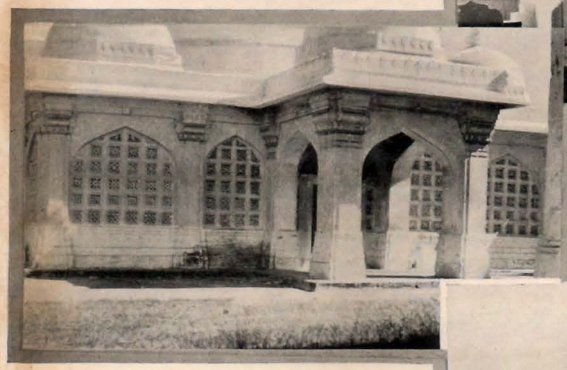
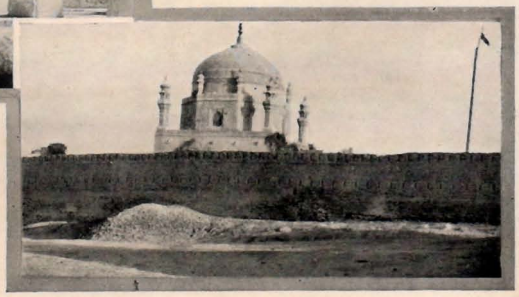
1. The Shrine of Pîr Ṣadru'd-dîn near Uchh.

2. The back view of the tomb of Sat Gur Nûr, Nawsari.



3. The back view of the tomb of Imam Shah, Pîrâna.



4. The Shrine of Ḥasan Kabîru'd-dîn, Uchh.

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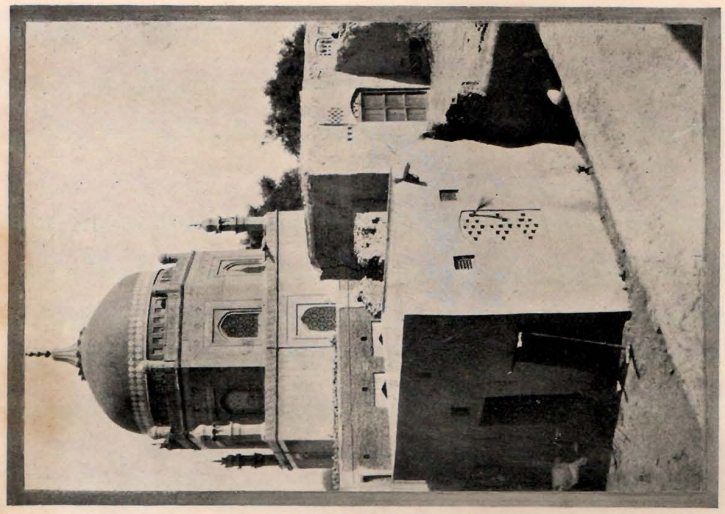
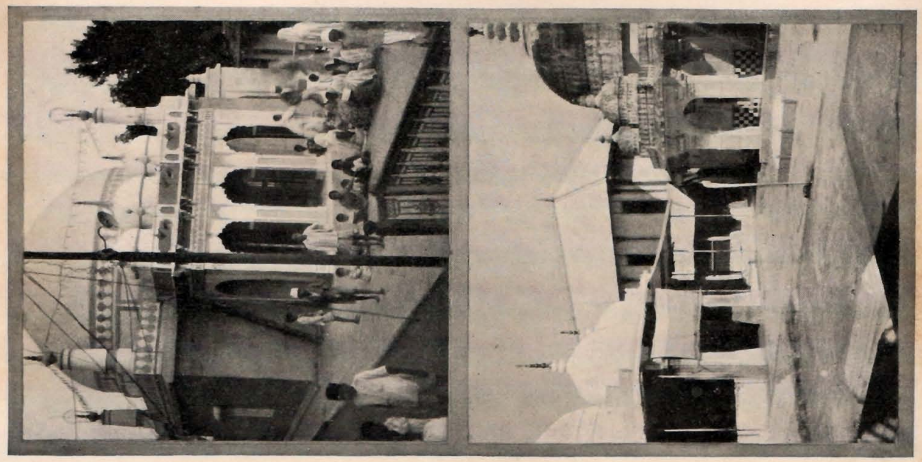


The Shrine of Shamsi Tabrîz in Multan.



Left:—1. Front view of the tomb of Sat Gur Nûr in Nawsari.

2. Front view of the tomb of Imâm Shâh in Pîrâna.

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governors appointed by Jahangir. It seems, however, that in spite of the economic improvements, the position of the sect was not flourishing, and their internal rivalries were as rampant as ever.

An interesting, though rather confused note on the saint, Muḥammad Shâhi Dûla Burhânpûrî, is given in a modern work, in Urdu, the "*Ta'rîkhi Burhânpûr*", by Maulvie Muḥammad Khalîlu'r-Raḥmân Burhânpûrî, composed in 1316/1898, and lithographed some fifteen years ago in Burhanpur. The author has compiled his note apparently from oral tradition preserved in Bahâdurpûr, where the grave of Muḥammad Shâh is situated, adding information which he found in some books. His story is therefore quite independent from the Gujrat tradition, presented by the author of the *Manâzil*, and is therefore worth quoting.

It is not clear why Muḥammad Shâh really left Pîrâna, and went to Burhânpûr in Khandesh. The author of the *Manâzil* does not mention any special outbursts of rivalry or enmity between the parties. Judging from the fact that he left his elder son and successor, Shâhjî Mîrân, in Pîrâna, his party was probably quite strong. It may be noted that in the beginning of the XVIIth century Burhânpûr was a kind of a capital of Western India. It was a very large and flourishing city, excellently fortified, and its population, including the suburbs and the nearest villages must have been very considerable, judging from the extensive ruins that one sees at present. It was a favourite residence of the members of the royal family, in view of its comparative proximity to Agra.[1]

Muḥammad Shâh, on his arrival, for some reasons first settled in a large suburban village, some four or five miles from the city, Bahâdurpûr, where he was buried later on, and where his grave is still the centre of pilgrimage of the Satpanthis of Khandesh. Converting local Hindus, of course in thousands, he later on moved to Burhânpûr itself. Here, on the bank of the river Tapi (as it is called locally, though on the maps and everywhere it is called

[1] As is well known, Mumtâz Maḥall, the wife of Shâhjahân, for whom the famous Tâj Maḥall was built in Agra, died in Burhanpur. The garden where her original grave was situated is still shown on the other bank of the Tapi, opposite the fort.

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Tapti), on which the city stands, just under the ancient fort, the ruins of which still exist, he appeared amongst the numerous Hindu temples, of which there are still many, and worked some special miracles which brought him many more converts. He was later on received by the governor of the province, Raḥîm Khân Âsîrî, became one of his intimate friends, and settled in the fort, where he lived with great pomp. He died on the 7th Rajab 1067/21-iv-1657, and was buried in Bahâdurpûr, mentioned above.

6) D:

It may also be useful to give here the substance of the note given in the *Ta'rîkhi Burhânpûr* (pp. 195-201), based on different sources of information :

Sayyid Muḥammad Shâhi Dûla was a descendant of *pîr* Na'îru-'d-dîn Muḥammad, who in the sixteenth generation descended from Imâm 'Alî Riḍâ, the son of Imâm Mûsâ Kâẓim, *i.e.* the eighth Imam of the Ithna-'asharis. His ancestors came from Medina and settled in Lahore, where they converted a great number of Hindus... Their position was not inferior to that of kings... The tomb of Na'îru'd-dîn is in Lahore. His son and successor, Shihâ-bu'd-dîn Muḥammad, settled in a village near the town, and was locally known as Sulṭân Shâh Walî. His son and successor, Shamsu'd-dîn Muḥammad, went to Multan, where he is buried. His son and successor, Muḥammad Ṣadru'd-dîn, was a great miracle worker. He went to Nawsari, near Surat, in Gujrat... (the author obviously confounds him with Sat Gur Nûr, about whom see further on). His son, Sayyid Kabîr(u'd-dîn) Ḥasan *kufr-shikan* (destroyer of impiety), belonged to the Suhrawardî affiliation of the Sufis. He travelled widely in the world, came to Uchh, and settled there. 'Abdu'l-Ḥaqq Dihlawî, in his hagiological work *Akhbâru'l-akhyâr*[1] narrates the same thing. According to him he reached the very old age of 180 years. He worked many miracles, and converted a great number of Hindus to Islam... This work was continued by some of his descendants. It is said that some of his descendants were misled by the temptation of their lower self, and fell into heresy, and this circumstance became the cause of the ruin of their reputation. He, Ḥasan Kabîru'd-dîn, died in 896/1491, and his grave is in Uchh.

[1] Cf. above, note 1 on p. 33.

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The author of the *Ta'rîkhi Burhânpûr* adds in explanation of these statements of 'Abdu'l-Ḥaqq a remark to the effect that this sad lapse really happened amongst the descendants of Kabîru'd-dîn in Gujrat, because they preached the Shi'ite religion. But in Burhânpûr itself, thanks to God, Muḥammad Shâhi Dûla, and his sons and grandsons are all good Sunnis, of the Hanafi school (though, in reality, with Shi'ite leanings).

He resumes the story of Ḥasan Kabîru'd-dîn, who had 18 sons, and appointed the youngest of them, Shâh Imâmu'd-dîn, as his chief *khalîfa*. He went to preach Islam in Gujrat and converted a large number of Hindus. He was born in 740/1339-1340, and died in 851/1447 (as we have seen above, according to this work, Ḥasan died in 896/1491). He appointed as his successor his son Nûr 'Alî Muḥammad Shâh (*i.e.* Nar Muḥammad), who was also a miracle worker, and converted a great number of Hindus, amongst whom was Nâyâ Kâkâ, who received the name of Naṣîru'd-dîn. He became a great saint. His son and successor was Sa'îdu'd-dîn Nûri Jahân, known as Sayyid Khân. He was a great saint and ascetic, who also converted a great number of Hindus. He composed a treatise in Gujrati, which is called the "Treasure of the mysteries of religious knowledge" (*Khizâna'i asrâri ma'rifat*, perhaps an allusion to the *Satveni*). He died in 900/1495, and was buried in the same mausoleum as Imâm Shâh. He was succeeded by his son Ṣâliḥu'd-dîn, who was an incomparable expert in *tafsîr*, *ḥadîth*, and *fiqh*, and a very successful missionary. His grave, in Ahmadabad itself, is much visited by his followers.

Naya Kaka's name

He was succeeded by his son, Sayyid Muḥammad Hâshim Shâh, who also was a great saint. His son and successor was the saint of Burhânpûr, Muḥammad Shâhi Dûla, who succeeded his father at the age of sixteen. He was always busy with worship of God, praying and fasting, worked many miracles, and slept very little; every day he used to put on a new dress, and distributed the old one to the poor. For this reason he was surnamed *Dûla* (bridegroom).[1] He did much missionary work in Khandesh,

[1] It was explained to me that, according to tradition, he wore not ordinary good clothes, but only those used on festive occasions, such as wedding, etc.

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converting "thousands of lakhs" of Hindus... He came to the village Bahâdurpûr near Burhânpûr, spreading his teaching, as far as Nâgpûr and elsewhere. He died on the 26th Rajab 1160 (obviously a mistake for 1060), *i.e.*, the 25th July 1650... His son and successor was Bâqir Shâh, who greatly benefited by his saintliness the peoples of Gujrat, Khandesh, and Berar. His second son, Ghulâm Muḥammad, was in charge of the community in Nâgpûr and other places. The grave of his brother, Sayyidâ Miyã, is near the city of Burhânpûr, outside of the Râjpûra gate[1]... At present (*i.e.* in 1316/1898?) his descendant in charge of his tomb is Sayyid Shihâbu'd-dîn, son of Imâmu'd-dîn. The information mentioned here was communicated by him (the author adds several names of his sons and close relatives whom he knew).

Baqir Shah

The end of the note furnishes a key to the strange story of Muḥammad Shâhi Dûla being a Sunnite. Most probably the author being a personal friend of the descendant of the saint and his family, felt himself bound to include a note on his friend's illustrious ancestor. But, as it was rather awkward to include the name of an Ismaili saint in a book devoted to notes concerning the most orthodox saints of the ancient city, he made him a Sunnite also. *Taqiyya* is often practiced by sectarians; but the present *sajjâda-nishîn* and his family really are Sunnites, there is no doubt about this.

Muḥammad Shâhi Dûla, was succeeded (in Pîrâna) by his eldest son Abû Muḥammad Shâhjî Mîrân, who was born in Pîrâna, and remained there when his father left for Burhânpûr. The author of the *Manâzil* mentions that he miraculously received information about his father's death, and arrived in time to Bahâdurpûr to bury him. In his note on Shâhjî Mîrân the author obviously copies what is said about him in the *Mir'âti Aḥmadî*, where he is referred to in the narrative of events during the governorship of Shujâ'at Khân, just before 1100/1688-9. Unfortunately, the chronology is here hopelessly confused.

7) B:

From what is said here it is possible to see that Shâhjî Mîrân was a weak sickly man, entirely dominated by his energetic wife,

[1] The author apparently heard nothing about his successor in the centre, Pîrâna, Shâhjî Mîrân.

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Râjî Ṭâhira. He hated crowds, and the necessity of appearing before them and accepting their expressions of worship. But, surely because his followers were always insistently taught never to come to see their *pîr* with empty hands, he had to submit to the dictates of custom. And, as it was too much for him, he sat behind a curtain, stretching out one of his feet to be kissed by his followers, coming for the *ziyârat*. The author of the *Manâzil* states that he was born in 1025/1616, and was thus over 35 when he succeeded his father. But such dates are usually quite unreliable, especially in this portion of his work.

It is doubtful whether under the circumstances he could do much for making his sect popular; but, strangely enough, he appears to be more popular than any of his immediate predecessors. Thus it is necessary to assume that the activities of his energetic wife amply compensated for his own lack of energy. As shown above, she even started a separate branch of the sect which was composed of the followers of her Hindu coachman.

Shâhjî Mîrân came to a tragic end about the beginning of the next century. The policy of intolerance introduced by Aurangzib, who by that time had become the ruling sultan, introduced many changes everywhere. Remote Gujrat, too, was not left alone, and the local governor received orders to summon the aged Sayyid to Dehli. The story of this event is differently narrated by the authors of the *Manâzil*, and the *Mir'âti Aḥmadî* (whose account was certainly familiar to the former). According to the *Mir'âti Aḥmadî*, certain officials with an armed escort were sent to Pîrâna to bring the Sayyid. The sickly old man refused to go. Then, apparently being dragged by force, he poisoned himself on the way to the city, and died not far from his native Pîrâna, where he was brought back to be buried there. It is quite possible that he died not from poisoning, but from heart failure owing to shock, and this was regarded as the effect of self-poisoning. According to another version, which is accepted by the author of the *Manâzil*, who tactfully mentions nothing about the refusal to go, he was brought to the city of Ahmadabad, and poisoned himself in the house of one of his friends with whom he stayed for the night, to appear next morning before the governor.

7) D:

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The rumours of the tragic death of the old Sayyid spread at once, and produced an immense commotion amongst his followers. Many thousands of the most peaceful peasants, especially those belonging to the caste of Matiya Kanbis, picking whatever arms they could get, began to flock together and move towards Ahmadabad. Arriving opposite the fort of Broach, on the Narbada river, they seized the ferry boats which they found there, crossed the river, slaughtered the weak garrison, and occupied the fort. They then proclaimed the little son of Shâhjî Mîrân, Sayyid Muḥammad Shâh, as the king of Broach, and for a long time successfully resisted the forces sent against them. Quite considerable armed force was necessary to suppress the insurrection, and to disperse this people. Muḥammad Shâh was seized and sent to Dehli.

8) B:

The author of the *Mir'âti Aḥmadî* frankly admits that he is not certain about the date of these events, and only knows that this happened during the governorship of Shujâ'at-Khân (*cf.* p. 324 of the first vol., in the Gaekwad series edition). But the author of the *Manâzil* gives the date of the death of Shâhjî Mîrân as the 10th Shawwâl 1113/10-iii-1702. Later on, however, he gives the date of the death of the son of Shâhjî Mîrân as 1110/1698, and this clearly shows that his dates are here hopelessly confused. *The Bombay Gazetteer* (vol. IX, part II, Bombay, 1899), p. 66, referring to these events, gives the date as 1691, *i.e.* 1103 A.H. Only the *Mir'âti Aḥmadî* is quoted as an authority, but, as we have seen, it really gives no date for the events. It is quite possible, however, that the date 1113, given by the *Manâzil*, is a mistake for 1103/1691-2.

Bombay Gazetteer

7) D: date

According to the *Mir'âti Aḥmadî* the son and successor of Shâhjî Mîrân was twelve years of age. The *Manâzil* gives six or seven years. The former mentions nothing about his further career, but the *Manâzil* narrates that he was presented to Aurangzib who sent him to Dawlatabad in the Deccan, where he was educated "with Prince Bahadur Shah." This is rather misleading, since it would appear as if the Prince was also a young boy at that time. In reality he was quite an old man, the governor of the province. Obviously Sayyid Muḥammad Shâh was simply educated at his court, in honourable captivity. The *Manâzil* even mentions the name of his teacher in religious subjects, as Qâḍî 'Abdu'l-lâh.

1679

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Sayyid Muḥammad Shâh spent twelve years in captivity. All this, of course, may only be as reliable, as the majority of the statements of the author.

Shîvdâs, a devoted follower of Shâhjî Mîrân, then finds his way to the young *pîr*, comes to Dawlatabad, and serves him. He enters into friendships with different courtiers, and, when Bahadur Shah ascends the throne in 1119/1707, he succeeds in obtaining the release of the Sayyid, and permission for him to return to Pîrâna. As Bahadur Shah ruled only for five years, 1119-1124/1707-1712, the event is easy to date.

The young Sayyid Muḥammad Shâh returns to Pîrâna only to discover that there is not much enthusiasm about his return. It is not clear whether the powerful Râjî Ṭâhira was his mother. Nevertheless she at once starts arranging for his marriage. The place, however, was entirely in the hands of the *kâkâs*; the Sâtiyâs and the Panchiyâs were in the ascendance, and the Âṭhṭhiyâ people were not hurrying up with their support. Accustomed to live in the luxury of palaces, he even found no house ready for him, and the general rustic conditions differed widely from what he had been accustomed to.

According to the *Manâzil*, his original intentions were to build a house, to marry, and to stay in Pîrâna. For all this money was required, and he asked the *kâkâs* to supply it. But the *kâkâs* definitely refused. It is difficult to understand the proceedings, unless we admit that possibly either Muḥammad Shâh was not recognized as a *pîr* by the majority, or that on account of the insurrection, and general policy of persecutions, the sect was financially in very shallow water. The young *pîr* threatened to curse and to abandon his people, but the *kâkâs* were adamant. Then Muḥammad Shâh leaves for Burhânpûr, where he has an interview with Bahadur Shah on his visit there. Something like four months later two messengers arrived from Pîrâna with an invitation to him to return there. They expressed their complete submission to him as a *pîr*, whom they were prepared to regard as an almost Divine being, in accordance with their beliefs. But, with regard to money they were not prepared to be more lavish than to the extent of offering him a generous contribution of rupees five only, *per mensem*. Five rupees were really produced

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from their pockets, and offered. In his furious indignation the young Sayyid threw them back their money, cursed the messenger and the whole community, and never returned to his native Pîrâna.

He was wandering in different towns of the Deccan, and ultimately lived for some time in Aḥmadnagar, where he died while still quite young. The date 1110/1698 most probably should be read something like 1130/1718.

8) D:

9) B:
1117

Shîvdâs, mentioned above, hurried to Pîrâna to carry the sad news, and to inform the followers that the Sayyid has married not long before his death, and that a son was born to him from this marriage, Muḥammad Fâḍil, who was only one year of age, and was the legitimate successor of the deceased. The body of Sayyid Muḥammad Shâh was brought for burial in Pîrâna, but his son remained for twelve years in Aḥmadnagar, where he was brought up under the supervision of Shîvdâs. Later on he was taken to Lâchhpûr, where Shîvdâs carried on propaganda in his name, and lived on tithes collected from new converts.

Again, something had happened in Pîrâna, and the result of such events was the fact that a huge deputation, of some two hundred people, was sent to invite the young *pîr* to come back. The story is very doubtful, and it is quite probable that the author invented it, or at least embellished and grossly exaggerated, as this point is of great importance for what he aims at in his book. It is possible that a party was formed who supported the young *pîr*, or, in other words, Shîvdâs himself. Anyhow, the Sâtiyâs and the Panchiyâs, as mentioned in the *Khoja Vratant*, believe that Fâḍil Shâh was in reality the son of a certain 'Aqîl, who went to Dehli, and succeeded in obtaining a certificate from the Moghul government to the effect that Muḥammad Fâḍil was the legitimate successor of Muḥammad Shâh.

According to the *Manâzil*, Sayyid Muḥammad Fâḍil Shâh was brought to Pîrâna, where he was met with great pomp, and apparently accepted by his alleged grand mother, the aged Râjî Ṭâhira. The enmity and jealousy between the local *kâkâs* and Shîvdâs burst out with great fury ; intrigues and accusations against the newcomers were started, and wild propaganda was carried on against the new *pîr*, who was proclaimed an impostor. Meanwhile

Fadil Shah
was not son of
Muhammad Shah

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Râjî Ṭâhira was arranging for his marriage to the daughter of a certain Sayyid Dosâ b. Âchhâ ; in the poisonous atmosphere of hatred, enmity, and intrigues, she died amidst these preparations, and the young man's chances appeared lost. He left Pîrâna, and tried to settle in Nawsari, at the shrine of Sat Gur Nûr, but was unsuccessful in this, and returned to Ahmedabad, where a son was born to him, on the 19th Shawwâl 1140/29-v-1728, and was named Afḍal. The author plainly states that the *kâkâs* conspired to poison the young *pîr*, believing that it was impossible to bring about the unity of the sect so long as he was alive.

10) B:date

On the 11th Rab. I 1144/13-ix-1731 another son was born to him, Sayyid Sharîf. The *pîr* by that time gave up all hopes of settling in Pîrâna, and went to Champanîr, where he had a great success in his missionary activities. The governor of the place received him with honour, and even gave him a gift of land. He died there on the 22nd Sha'bân 1159/9-ix-1746, and was succeeded by his younger son, Sayyid Sharîf.

9(D:

The author of the *Manâzil* does not spare any sign of greatness and miraculous powers to exalt the position of the new *pîr* ; but he really seems to have been an able man. He succeeded where his father failed, namely in strengthening his position, and making possible his return to Pîrâna. This took him about twenty-five years of work, and in or about 1185/1771 he came back to Ahmedabad. The enmity and hostility of the rival parties, though considerably abated, had, however, by no means died out, but now took the form of incessant litigation, which has since never ceased, and is still going on.

10)B

Gujrat was passing through hard times owing to the disintegration of the rapidly decaying Moghul empire. Local authorities were not only corrupt, but were also practically powerless. Under the conditions such as these, Sayyid Sharîf, after his return to Pîrâna, soon discovered that his life was not quite safe in this home of intrigue and envy. He tried to settle in Cambay, which is about twenty miles distant from the place, but even his temporary absence brought about some ugly developments. The *kâkâs*, by bribes, as the author says, arranged with the local authorities to seize the ancient historical house of the *pîrs*, the *ḥuwaylîyi Râjî Ṭâhira*,

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built by the grandson of Sa'îd Khân; they pulled it down, selling all that could be sold, and using the material for repairs of their own houses. When news of this act of vandalism, or rather sacrilege, reached the Sayyid, he rushed back, only to find that it was too late. Curses and excommunication followed, and the atmosphere of the holy place remained as tense as ever.

Mutawalli = chief guardian of shrine

Probably the greatest success of the new *pîr* was achieved by his diplomatical talents, by uniting the Sayyid family against the *kâkâs*. The *mutawallî*, or the chief guardian of the shrine of Imâm Shâh, a direct descendant of the saint, by senior line, of undisputable genealogy, Sayyid Karâmu'l-lâh b. Ja'far, who had no male issue, decided to give his daughter in marriage to the *pîr*. All this was offered under the appropriate "sauce" of miracles, Divinely inspired dreams, etc.; as it was clear to every body, it was tantamount to the recognition of the genuineness of Sayyid Sharîf's claims for pîrship, and of his descent from Imâm Shâh. Moreover, when on the 2nd Rajab 1189/29-viii-1775 a son was born to him from this union, the aged Sayyid Karâmu'l-lâh appointed his infant grandson as his successor in the hereditary office of the guardian of the shrine. To make this quite safe, he even registered his will with the authorities.

11) B:date

This son of Sayyid Sharîf, Badru'd-dîn surnamed Barâ Miyã, was also a very clever man; he proved this when he succeeded his father on the latter's death in the end of Rajab 1209/about the 20th February 1795.

10) D:

✔

He continued the policy of his father by gradually reducing the importance of the *kâkâs*, and by preserving good relations with the local authorities. He had done much prozelytising work, and gradually brought under his control the different shrines of the sect outside Pîrâna, especially that of Sat Gur Nûr in Nawsari (in 1237/1821-2).

11) B:

Here the narrative of the *Manâzilu'l-aqṭâb* ends. The author apparently personally participated in the *pîr's* excursion to Nawsari.

11) D:

According to the tradition, Badru'd-dîn died the 7th Jum. II 1243/26-xii-1827, and was succeeded by his son, Bâqir 'Alî. The latter is considered as the last *pîr* by the Âṭhṭhiyâs. He died most probably in 1251/1835, without leaving any successor, and thus the

12) B:

12) D:

(End)

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ancient line came to an end. It would be interesting to record a correct story of these events.

The necropolis of Pîrâna undoubtedly is an extremely interesting relic of Mediaeval India ; it would really form the most interesting subject of a detailed and critical monograph, giving its historical topography, history, etc. At present it is rapidly declining not only due to the unceasing quarrels and litigation between the rival parties of Sayyids and the *kâkâs*, but also, in a greater degree, owing to the "modern spirit" in India. This brings rapidly growing religious indifference, political agitation, and aggressive propaganda of various Hindu organisations, especially the Arya Samaj, which draw a great number of the followers of Imâm Shâh back to Hinduism, while, on the other side, the Sayyids have neither energy, nor money, nor education to carry on missionary work. Some of them are very learned in their *gnans*, but know nothing besides this.

Before leaving the subject of the history of the sect, it is necessary to add a note on the worship of Sat Gur Nûr, an ancient saint, whose shrine is in Nawsari, not far from Surat, and is visited not only by the followers of the Imâm-Shâhî sect, but also by many Parsees.

Students owe a debt of gratitude to the learned guardian of the shrine, Sayyid Ṣadru'd-dîn, who devoted a very detailed monograph to the *Pîr*. His *Tawârîkhi Pîr*, in Gujrati, has already appeared in two parts (1914 and 1935). In it he gives a great number of interesting legends, miracle stories, an account of the history of the sect, some information about the doctrine of the Pîrs, etc. Unfortunately, notwithstanding all this, the student has to start afresh because his book is written from the view point of a pious believer, who never doubts as to the truth of the miracles of the *Pîr*, however strange they may seem to the modern reader.

It must be frankly admitted that we know absolutely nothing about the date at which the *Pîr* settled or died in Nawsari, who he was, and what religion he really preached. There are some well-known *gnans* ascribed to him, but they scarcely contain enough material to permit of an exhaustive answer. According to common belief, faithfully upheld in the *Tawârîkhi Pîr*, the saint was in reality the seventh Imam of the Ismailis, Muḥammad b. Ismâ'îl.

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All that is authentically known about the latter is that he was a very learned man, who, fearing the plots of the Abbasid caliphs, migrated to Persia, where he died, most probably, about the end of the second, or beginning of the third century A.H., *i.e.*, in the first quarter of the IXth c. A.D. The followers of Sat Gur Nûr at present give 487/1094 as the date of his death in Nawsari. Thus he had to live for more than 350 years. The date 487/1094 is also engraved on his tomb (in quite modern writing). In fact, this is the date of the death of the Fatimide caliph of Egypt, al-Mustanṣir bi'l-lâh. It is quite possible that for some reason this date became familiar to the local followers of the saint, and was accidentally associated with his death.

There is no doubt that Ismaili missionaries were at work in this part of India under the early Fatimids. Quite possibly there were also Qarmatian missionaries here before them. But while several graves of such ancient missionaries are still known in Cambay, and still revered by the Bohoras, or the Ismailis preserving the Fatimid tradition, they know nothing about Pîr Sat Gur Nûr. It is quite possible therefore that the grave really may contain the remains of a very ancient Ismaili missionary; but it is also possible that he came about the time of Imâm Shâh. Very unfortunately, his mausoleum has been rebuilt and restored so many times that practically no external indications of antiquity of the place are left at present. A visitor can scarcely believe in the extraordinary age claimed for it by its present guardians.

3. *A Summary of the Doctrine of the Sect.*

A detailed and exhaustive study of the doctrine of the sect will only be possible when all the works of the early *pîrs*, on which it is based, had been critically studied. In a short note such as the present it is only possible to mention a few of the principal tenets which may be regarded as the basic ideas on which the whole structure rests.

As mentioned above, the spirit of caste in the life of the converts to the new religion proved much stronger than any other principle. The Hindus converted to the Pîrâna faith remained Hindus, and members of their corresponding castes. This was probably partly due to the general social system of Indian life in the Middle Ages,

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or was deliberately left undisturbed by the missionaries. But, anyhow, there was probably little change in the case of the converts' life and psychology after their conversion. Their customs, ideas, ideals, and practically everything except in purely religious sphere, had to be that of the people who surrounded them. The tenets of Islamic origin were chiefly concerned with the inner and intimate life, *i.e.*, with the "soul."

The fundamental principles of Islam, as is well-known, are usually summed up as belief in One God, who has no companions or rivals, and in the mission of His Apostle and Prophet, Muḥammad, who has taught the religion revealed to him by the Deity. If only these principles are concerned, the Imam-Shahis can justly claim to be faithful Muslims because they accept both these beliefs. But further on the matters become much more complex. The form of Islam which was preached by the early *pîrs* was Ismailism, with its rationalistic and Shi'ite tendency. At the same time the *pîrs* also introduced the Sufic spirit which has been absorbed by mediæval Persian Ismailism. Thus, laying stress on the moral and spiritual moments in religious life, the doctrine of the *pîrs* did not attach special importance to the forms of outward piety. This was an asset, and at the same time a danger. Non-insistence on reciting the daily prayers, etc., made conversion of Hindus much easier than it would otherwise have been. But the absence of the outward signs of connection with Islam, especially having regard to the conditions in which the great majority of the converts lived, offered a great possibility to Hinduism to hold them within its fold even after they officially have renounced it. For this reason those converts who remained faithful to the original Ismaili doctrine, the Khojas, as they are called in India after the community to which the majority of them belong, could evolutionize towards purer forms of Islam, gradually giving up their original Hindu psychology and practices. But those who sided with the Imam-Shahi *pîrs* after the split were bound to yield to the continuous pressure of Hinduism, and to shift further and further away from Islam.

The Imam-Shahis believe in One God, the Creator of the world. His idea is the same as in the Coran. But at the same time they admit the theory of incarnation, or avatar. This does not mean

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that God, in His greatness, becomes a man, or whatever may be. The idea is approximately the same as in Christian speculations about Jesus Christ. The Divine Light, which is the source of life, order and consciousness of all beings, becomes, so-to-say, focused upon a certain mortal man, who, remaining an ordinary man as far as his body is concerned, is at the same time the bearer of the Divine substance, which is one and the same as that of God Himself; and, as this substance, obviously, is indivisible, and cannot be partly in one place, and partly in another, there must be a complete equation between him and God. All this can only be comprehended by intuition, or creative effort of intellect; the laws of logic are powerless over this.

Such Divine Man, or man participating in the Substance of God, is the Imam, the direct descendant, and rightfully authorised successor of ʿAlî ibn Abî Ṭâlib, the son-in-law and cousin of the Prophet. As is well-known, the idea of the Imam differs in various Shiʿite sects, and even in different branches of the Ismailis. According to the ideas of the Persian Ismailism from which the Imam-Shahis have taken it, the Imam is the Divinely inspired leader of mankind; there must always be an Imam in the world, which would instantly perish, if the Imam disappears even for a moment.

According to the most fundamental historiosophic theories of Ismailism, the world after its creation has a history which is divided into millennial cycles or periods (*dawr*). At the beginning of each *dawr* God sends a great Prophet, a founder of a new religion, or rather civilisation which develops under the guidance of the Imams, who succeed one after the other. By the end of the *dawr*, when the old religion, most probably, ceases to meet the requirements of the time, God sends another Prophet who cancels the religion of his predecessor, and preaches his own. According to these ideas there have already been six *dawrs*: of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and of Muḥammad. There were Imams during the first five *dawrs*, but their names for the most part are forgotten. In the *dawr* of Muḥammad the first Imam was ʿAlî, and he was succeeded by his direct descendants and successors.

This original scheme of the world's history closely resembles the Hindu cosmogonical myths, with their *yugs*, and *avatars*. As it was practised on many occasions in India by many Muham-

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madan theologians who planned a *rapprochement* with Hinduism, these forgotten pre-historical saints and Imams were quite easily identified with different figures in the Hindu pantheon. Thus Vishnu, or Parmeshvar, is the name of God the Creator, the same as Allah in Muhammadanism. Adam becomes Mahadev, or Shiv, etc.

As is well-known, Hindu cosmogony consists of different myths, which often do not tally one with the other, as they are narrated in the canonical eighteen Puranas. It appears that at first five eternal Prakartis were created, *i.e.*, five elements: earth, water, air, fire, and *akas*, *i.e.*, space or sound carrying ether. Other versions give different names for the elements. The great abstract formative and regulating force, the *'Aql* of the neo-Plantonic philosophy accepted by Ismailism, is here identified with Brahma, to whom Parmeshvar = Vishnu = 'Alî entrusts the Ved, *ma'rifat*. There are four Veds,—Ruguved, Yazurved, Shamved and Atharvved (as their names are pronounced in Gujrati). The latter includes also the Coran, and also Jambul (Zabûr, or Psalms), and Tawrat. But about the latter two exotical books the Pîrâna-wâllâs know next to nothing. The Veds are not preserved in their entirety, only fragments exist.

The Coran is thus of Divine origin. The sect accepts the usual Shi'ite belief that originally it was composed of forty *pâras*, but the ordinary copies contain only thirty of these, and the other ten are known only to the Imams.

It would require too much space to give here all the cosmogonical myths of Hinduism which the sect accepts. The reader may find them in the books dealing with Hindu cosmology. The history of the world is divided into four *yugs*, and each of these into several periods during which the Creator manifested himself in a certain form. The first *yug*, Satya, or Kartayug, is divided into four, the second into three, the third into two avatars, and the last, the Kaliyug, contains only one avatar, that of 'Alî. Thus there are ten avatars in all. According to ancient prophecies it was believed that the last, tenth avatar will come in the kingdom of the Mlechh, *i.e.*, foreigners. By the time the early *pîrs* came to India the term *mlechh* had already acquired special meaning,—Muslim. Thus they could easily identify the Imam of the Muslims with the tenth avatar.

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The fundamental idea of an avatar is the fight of the Deity against the Arch-enemy who either steals the Ved, or does some other mischief. The unsophisticated people may accept these stories literally, the more sophisticated may seek in them symbolical expression of different moral or philosophical ideas. The Khojas, under the guidance of the Imams, regard the earlier nine as symbolical; but the true Imam-Shahis take them literally.

The first avatar is called Machh, fish, because the Deity accepted this form, and went into the sea in search of the Ved stolen by the Enemy. The next was Kachh, or Korab, tortoise, the shape of which Vishnu took to fight the Enemy in the form of a scorpion; the third is Vara, the boar, fighting the peacock. The fourth—Narsinh, man-lion; the fifth,—Vayaman, or dwarf, who in three and half steps covered the whole world; the sixth is Parsram the Brahman; the seventh—Ram, the hero of the Ramayan; the eighth is Krishna, and the ninth is Buddh, a sort of a strange being.

The Arch-enemy will make his appearance, in the form of Kalinga, *i. e.* the Dajjâl, at the end of the world, and the "stainless" (Niklanki, *ma'ṣûm*) Imam will defeat him. The Imam-Shahis believe that this last and final Imam will be Imam Mahdî, the twelfth Imam of the Ithna-'asharis, who still remains alive in a cave North of Baghdad. It is quite obvious that in their ignorance they have misunderstood the term *Mahdî*, and thus apply it to the Imam of a different line.

It appears that they have given up the fundamental Ismaili principle about the uninterrupted chain of the Imams, and believe into *ghayba*, *i.e.*, the possibility of the world remaining without the Imam. Moreover, they accept the possibility of the transfer of Imamate from an Imam to a person who is not his own son; this is absolutely against the Ismaili principles. Their ideas about the *pîr*, or the head missionary of the sect, fall little short of those about the Imam.

It is interesting that some Imam-Shahis assure us that there are only forty Imams; other members of the sect take only thirty-six. It is remarkable that they omit some of the Imams who are accepted by the Nizaris in general. Thus they omit Ruknu'd-dîn Khûrshâh, the last Imam of Alamut, and take after him: Shamsu-'d-dîn, Qâsim Shâh, Islâm Shâh, then the son of Imâm-Shâh,—

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Nar Muḥammad Shâh; then a certain Shihâbu'd-dîn, then Jalâl Shâh, then Murtaḍâ Shâh, and Muḥammad Ashraf, who died in Dehli in 1075/1664-5, in the time of Aurangzib. It is quite probable, however, that the saints after Nar Muḥammad are simply *pîrs*, representing the senior line of the guardians of Pîrâna. Another version which I noted in Pîrâna equally omits Ruknu'd-dîn, but after Islâm Shâh gives Nûr 'Alî, then Imâm Shâh, then Nar Muḥammad Shâh, and then the four last Imams of the preceding line. As usual, there is a great confusion in the names of the earlier Imams, and even their number; thus one and the same genealogy may be regarded by them as containing either 40 or 36 names.

Ashraf Shah died in Delhi

The evolution of the *pîr*, as mentioned in the preceding section, was largely prepared by the Hinduistic theories deifying the priest who offers the sacrifice, the Brahman, etc. In reality, of course, the chief cause was the peculiar Hindu thirst for deification and worship of all sorts of gurus, mahatmas, etc., whether genuine or not, which has already been referred to above.

These are the basic ideas about God and His manifestations. Now, taking the second part of the Muslim *kalima*, or creed, about the Prophet, it is necessary to note that in the course of speculations the difference between him, the Imams, and the *Pîrs* has entirely vanished. The Prophet is called *Pîr*, or *Gur*; there are, in fact, *pîrs* of different ranks. He, his son-in-law 'Alî, his daughter Fâṭima, and both his grandsons, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, the *Panj-tan*, are also regarded as Divine beings. Fâṭima is usually identified with some female deities of the Hindu Olympus.

The Divine revelation, the Coran, is accepted. As in Ismailism, it is allegorically interpreted by the Imam and the persons who are authorised by the latter. This method of *ta'wîl*, as it is called in Arabic, is here called *alankar*. Such *ta'wîl*, or *alankar*, explanations are found in the large literature of the *gnans* and other works of the ancient *pîrs*, about which much is said above. These, in reality, constitute the principal contents of the religious knowledge of their priests, who rarely possess enough knowledge to refer directly to the Coran itself. Many of them, especially the *kâkâs* or *mukhis* from amongst the Hindus usually do not know the Arabic alphabet.

Kuran is accepted

The religion which is based on the *gnans*, as far as I could ascertain from others, without being in position to read the original

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works of the ancient *pîrs*, much more resembles popular Sufism rather than Ismailism. The prayers contain some familiar Arabic formulas, to which are added different appeals, etc., of the type of Sufic *dhikrs*. But regular Islamic *namâz* is never performed by the Imam-Shahis (contrary to the Khojas). And on the top come recitations of the *gnans*, Special prayers are recited at *chandrât*, *i.e.*, the first night on which the new moon becomes visible. There are only very few special holidays, or days of mourning during the Muḥarram memorial days.

To this Islamic religious nucleus are added all sorts of the original Hindu taboos, customs, restrictions, prejudices, etc., etc., of which Hindu life is so full. The Imam-Shahis are strict vegetarians, and have thousands of local, caste, season, etc., observances and customs to follow. Generally, they do not fast, but only when the new moon becomes visible for the first time on Friday. There are some other special days. Nothing is so remote from the original spirit of Ismailism, with its exceptional sobermindedness, rational outlook, and contempt for all sorts of superstition.

In the moral system, the Hindu ideals of piety, quite naturally, predominate, though Sufic virtues are often emphasised (but probably never attained). Caste, and its customary regulations always dominate all; but the Sufic shifting of the stress upon the inner, spiritual life, appeals to some. The Ismaili ideals about the harmony between the soul and body, and avoidance of every form of exaggeration, unbalanced devotion, etc., are not much in demand. What Muslim theologians call *taqlîd*, or blind following to the established standards and example of leaders, is the rule. It is to some extent supplemented by the *taqiyya*, or precautionary dissembling, and outward complying with the practice of the religion of the hostile majority, as generally permitted by the Shi'ites.

It is interesting to quote the list of sins which completely deprive the sinner from all hope for salvation. They are: 1. *parninda*, or calumny; 2. *âḷ*, or false and ruinous allegations; 3. *pargaman*, or adultery, rape, etc.; 4. *âp-hatiya*, or suicide; and 5. *baḷ-hatiya*, or infanticide. This set is really remarkable. Thus infanticide and suicide are mortal sins, but ordinary murder is not. Calumny and false allegations (which seem to be one and the same thing) are great sins, but fraud, robbery, theft, etc., are not.

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Great importance is attached to repentence, *tawba*, and sin removing, *lahe-utarni*, which is performed by the village *kâkâ*, or *mukhi*. The sinner comes, bringing four copper coins, an earthen jug, or cup, a tin or brass box, and some frankincense. He confesses that has committed a sin, though he, or she, has no need to explain what it was. The *kâkâ* recites some appropriate prayers, burns the incense, and the sin is gone.

An important religious duty is the payment of the *dasondh*, or tithe (*'ushr*). It is paid to the *kâkâ*, on behalf of the dead saint. The moneys so collected are to be distributed amongst the descendants of the saint. Of late, however, there was much litigation, and the point of view of the *kâkâs* is that the moneys should be spent in accordance with their own ideas.

In addition to this regular payment, the visitors to the shrine must not come empty-handed, especially on the occasion of the anniversary (*'urs*) of the death of the saint, etc. Formerly valuable presents were brought, but now 99 per cent. of offerings consist of cocoanuts, and cheap foodstuffs. The cocoanuts are usually broken at the shrine, in a special place. Most probably the hairy appearance of the cocoanut was intended to resemble the head of the devotee, symbolically offered to the saint. I do not know whether this idea is implied by the visitors. But it is very interesting that parents bring their infant sons to the shrine, and have their hair shaved before it. This custom was followed even by many Khojas, but they have now discontinued it.

Marriage, inheritance, etc., is regulated by the Hindu customs of the castes to which the devotees belong. The dead are cremated, but the bones which remain are buried. The well-to-do pay quite large sums for permission to bury the bones of their dead in the compound before the shrine of Imam Shah. It is paved with many slabs covered with inscriptions in Gujrati. As far as I could see, there are no really old ones, i.e., more than a hundred years. The *kâkâs* are supposed to be buried without being cremated.

On the *'urs* occasions special ceremonies are performed, the silver cover of the tomb is washed with milk, annointed with sandal wood paste, etc. So it is the custom at the shrine of Sat Gur Nûr in Nawsari. It is interesting that women, who are otherwise freely admitted to the mausoleum of that saint, cannot be present at this ceremony. All males rush in, so that there is

Sandal Ceremony on Urs

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terrible heat and stench; nevertheless doors are closed and the ceremony goes on for almost the whole of the night.

The salvation which the faithful expect to attain by compliance with all the rules and laws of their religion is pictured in the rather Sufic style of *fanâ fi'l-lâh*, or *baqâ bi'l-lâh*, or, as the sectarians themselves explain in a mixture of Arabic with Gujrati, *asal-mân wasal*, i.e. what should be *al-waṣl ilâ'l-aṣl*, "return to the original source."

Souls (*arwâḥ*, *atma*) are created by the Creator. Each soul possesses an individuality, and is subject to rebirth. It is reborn in the form of either objects of inorganic life or animal life for one hundred thousand times, until it becomes born in a human form. In this it should be reborn for 84 times,—35 times in the first *yug*, 25 in the second, 16 in the third, and only eight in the fourth. Only those souls are saved which become followers of Imam Shah and his successors when incarnated in a human form. Between rebirths there are periods of waiting. *Mukti*, or *moksha*, salvation, is dissolution in the Deity. Swarg, Paradise, and Nark, Hell, though often figure in their speculations, possess rather symbolic sense.

Though all this is purely Hinduistic, such Islamic ideas as weighing of souls, the "bridge," the Last Day which will last 50,000 years, etc., are also accepted. Angels, and various eschatological figures, such as Burâq, on which the Prophet travelled in the night of Mi'râj, etc., are treated as minor deities.

All this appears very primitive, indeed, if stated in plain and dry language, and the success which the religion had during nearly half a millennium, and by which it still keeps together about two hundred thousand followers, surely could not entirely depend on this. The chief thing that is the real mover and creative element in the religious life of an Imâm-Shâhî is the strange fascination, the majestic pathos, and beauty of its sacred religious poetry, the *gnans*. Its mystical appeal equals, if not exceeds, that exercised by the Coran on Arabic speaking peoples. They are the centre around which the religious life of the sect revolves. Nothing would probably be left of their magic force and fascination if they were translated, especially into a modern European language, just as nothing is left of the majestic beauty of the Coran in a translation. But it seems a great pity that so far the *gnans* remain unknown to the students of Indian antiquity.

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ADDENDA.

After this article was set up in type, and paged, I received more information about the independent Eastern branch of the Satpanthi sect, founded by Muḥammad Shâhi Dûla, who was referred to above (cf. pp. 48-52). At present the followers of the sect are for the most part agriculturists, and belong to the castes of Kunbis, Rajputs, Gujurs, and Malis, usually speaking Marathi or Hindi; they are found in the districts of Khandesh, Berar, and Nimar. It is said, — most probably quite optimistically,—that there are about twenty thousand of them. The headquarters of the sect is Bahâdurpûr, a village four miles from Burhanpur, in which, as already mentioned, Muḥammad Shâhi Dûla,—and later on many of his descendants,—are buried. The village is still the residence of the hereditary *pîr*, or *sajjâda-nishîn*. The family of the latter are at present Sunnites.

Muḥammad Shâhi Dûla, as is known, was recognized as a *pîr* by all branches of the Satpanthis, but his son, and the subsequent heads of the branch had only local importance. His son, Muḥammad Bâqir, and grandson, Zaynu'l-'âbidîn, were not so remarkable as the son of the latter, " Mahdî Ṣâḥib ", as he is usually called, or Muḥammad Madhî, who probably flourished in the beginning of the XII/XVIIIth c. He had no sons, and, on his death, was succeeded by one of his daughters, Faḍlan Begum. The latter was succeeded by her sister, Sulṭân Begum, who adopted one of her relatives, Jân Ṣâḥib, who succeeded her as a *pîr*. This Jân Ṣâḥib was the son of Shâh-jî Miyă, son of Imâmu'd-dîn, son of Zaynu'l-'âbidîn, and therefore was the son of her cousin. He had a son, Sikandar 'Alî, who succeeded him. But he left no posterity, and was succeeded by his wife, Shâhjahân Begum. The latter adopted as her successor on her death in 1280/1863 her relative, Shihâbu'd-dîn, who was a son of Imâmu'd-dîn, a brother of Jân-Ṣâḥib. Shihâbu'd-dîn, on his death in 1324/1906, was succeeded by his son, Sayyid Ashraf 'Alî Shâh, the present *sajjâda-nishîn* who is about 80 years old. He has already appointed as his successor his son Sayyid Nûr 'Alî Muḥammad Shâh.

There is no fundamental difference in the doctrine of the branch as compared with other branches of the Satpanthis, but

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occasionally there are some differences in practices. For instance, the Burhanpuris do not cremate their dead, but bury them. Eating meat is tolerated. The ceremony of removing a sin (*lahe uttarni*) is not practiced, etc. They occasionally go on a pilgrimage to Pîrâna and Nawsari, and regard this as a meritorious act. But they have no *kakas* in the centre (just as in Nawsari). They have the same *gnans* and other religious books, but though they remain in their original languages such as antiquated Sindhi, Gujrati, Panjabi and Hindi, they usually employ the Nagari alphabet, instead of the Gujrati.

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